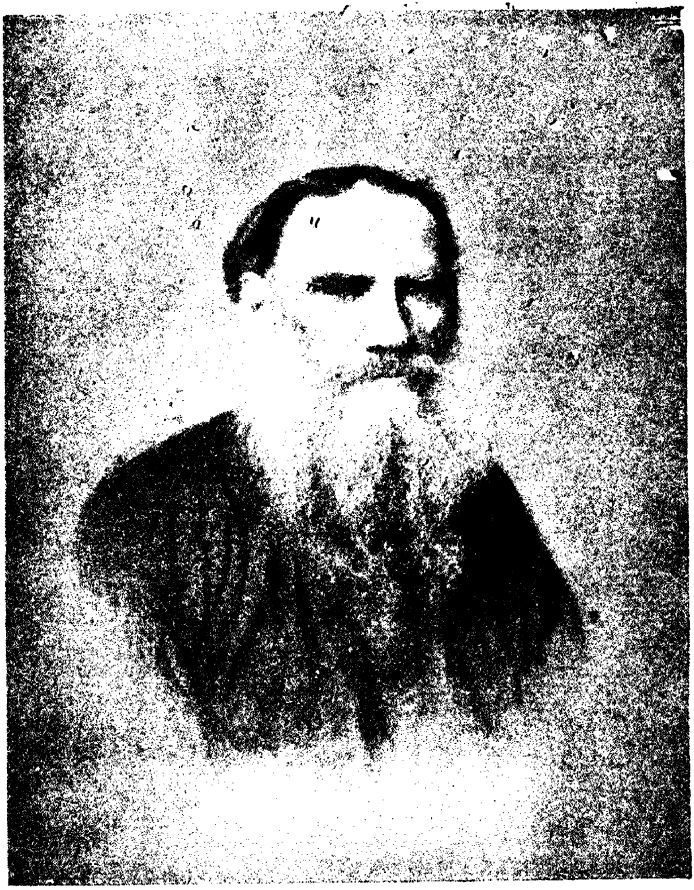
THE KREUTZER SONATA

COUNT LEO NIKOLAEVITCH TOLSTOY

Russian author, social reformer and religious mystic, was born on August 28th, 1828. He studied at Moscow and Kazan, and was for a time in the army, but left it after the storming of Sebastopol in 1855. He married in 1862, settled on his estates, and, deeply moved by the trials and sufferings of the peasantry, resigned all privileges of rank, became an adherent of the doctrine of non-violence and devoted the remainder of his life to a self-denying and progressive idealism, becoming the "friend of the unfriended poor." He died on November 20th, 1910.

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Count Leo Tolstoy

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LEO TOLSTOY

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I

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"—MATT. v. 28.

"His disciples say unto Him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it"—MATT. xix. 10, 11, 12.

IT was early spring. We had spent two fatiguing days and one night in the train. Passengers going short distances were coming in and getting out continually, but there were three besides myself who had ridden the whole way from the terminus where the train

started; a lady, no longer young or attractive, given to smoking, dressed in a man's great-coat with a small felt hat on her head, whose face betrayed long, deep suffering; a friend of hers, a loquacious gentleman about forty, resplendent in new clothes; and another gentleman who was short and, moved nervously, but was not yet old, though his curly hair was prematurely grey. His eyes flitted ceaselessly from object to object as he sat apart from the other passengers.

He wore an old overcoat evidently made by a fashionable tailor, with an Astrakhan collar and an Astrakhan cap to match. Beneath it, when it was unbuttoned, a jacket was visible and an embroidered shirt, of the kind known as "Russian" shirts. It was peculiar to him that from time to time he uttered strange sounds like a short cough or laugh begun and suddenly broken off. He care-

fully avoided making the acquaintance of his fellow-passengers during the journey. To all their attempts at conversation he gave curt and churlish replies, and would either begin reading or smoking and looking out of the window, or else he would pull provisions out of an old bag and make tea for himself or eat a bit. It seemed to me his loneliness oppressed him and I tried more than once to enter into conversation, but every time our eyes met—and it happened pretty often as he sat at the further end of the seat opposite me—he always turned away burying himself in his book or looking out of the window.

During the stop at a big station on the evening of the second day, this very nervous man went out to fetch boiling water in order to make some tea. The gentleman in the new clothes —a lawyer, as I gathered afterwards—went to the refreshment room to have tea with the

lady smoker attired in a man's overcoat. While they were away, several new passengers got into the carriage, and among them a tall, clean-shaven old man—obviously a merchant—his face lined with wrinkles, who wore a large fur coat, made of the skins of American skunks, and a cloth cap with a tremendous peak. He sat down on the seat opposite that occupied by the lady and the lawyer, and began at once talking with a young man, probably a merchant's clerk, who had just entered.

I was sitting at the further end of the seat opposite, and, as the train was standing still, I could distinguish parts of their conversation, whenever there was no one strolling through the passage. The merchant began by volunteering the news that he was going to his estate, which lay near the next station. Then, as always in such cases, they spoke about prices, about commerce, discussed the

current state of business in Moscow, and then proceeded to talk of the Nizhni-Novgorod Fair. The clerk started describing the drinking-bouts and other mad escapades of a well-known rich merchant at the Fair, but the old man did not let him tell his story to the end, interposing stories of ancient debauches at the Kunavin Fair, in which he himself had taken part. He clearly plumed himself on his participation in these orgies, and with obvious delight went on to tell how he and that same wealthy merchant had, under the influence of liquor, in Kunavin, once played such a prank that it could not even be described otherwise than in a whisper. It made the clerk, on hearing it, roar with laughter till his voice re-echoed from one end of the carriage to the other, whilst the old man also laughed loudly, displaying two yellow fangs. Not expecting to hear anything interesting, I got up and

walked to the door with the intention of sauntering up and down the platform till the departure of the train. On the threshold I met the lawyer and the lady on their way back to their seats, engaged in a lively conversation.

"You'll not have time," exclaimed the talkative lawyer to me: "the second bell is just about to ring."

He was right. I had scarcely reached the end of the train when the second bell rang. I went back and found the lawyer and the lady continuing their animated talk. The old merchant sitting opposite them was looking straight before him, now and then pursing his lips disapprovingly.

"Then she told her husband straight out," the lawyer remarked with a smile, as I was moving past him to my place, "That she could not and would not live any more with him, because——"

The rest of the story I failed to catch, for no sooner had I taken my seat than other passengers came in, then the guard, and soon afterwards a porter with luggage; and for a considerable time there was such a noise that I could not gather what was being talked.

When the din had diminished and the lawyer's voice became again audible, I observed the conversation had changed from private to general subjects. The lawyer was declaring that the question of divorce was now claiming and receiving serious public attention in the whole of Europe, and that even in Russia the cases in which it was granted were becoming more and more common. Suddenly growing aware that his was the only voice heard in the carriage, he stopped speaking, and turning to the old man:

"In the olden times there was nothing like

it, I am certain, was there.'" he said, blandly smiling.

The merchant was going to make some answer, but at that moment the train started, and, removing his cap, he began to make the sign of the cross and to mumble some prayers. The lawyer, looking away waited politely till he had finished. Having ended his prayer and crossed himself thrice, the old man put his cap on, pressed it firmly on his head, made himself at home in his seat, and then began to speak.

"It used to happen in the olden times also, sir," he remarked, "only not so frequently as now. But now it could not be otherwise. People have become so wonderfully enlightened."

The train as it sped faster and faster creaked and clanked, and made it very hard for me to hear what was being talked, and, as the talk

interested me, I moved nearer the speakers. My neighbour, the extremely nervous passenger with the glittering eyes, was, I could see interested also; and he likewise tried to overhear what was being said, but without getting up or leaving his place.

"In what way is education an evil?" inquired the lady, with a hardly perceptible smile on her lips. "It cannot surely be held that it is better to marry as in the olden times, when the bride and bridegroom had not so much as seen each other before the wedding?" she went on, after the fashion of many ladies, answering not the words of her interlocutor but the remarks she supposed he would make. "They did not know whether they liked one another, or whether they could possibly like one another, and yet they married they knew not whom, making themselves wretched for life. Is that indeed a better state of things in your

opinion?" she continued addressing her observations unmistakably to the lawyer and myself, and scarcely, if at all, to the old man with whom she was apparently talking.

"People nowadays have become wonderfully enlightened," the merchant repeated, contemptuously glancing at the lady and leaving her question unanswered.

"I should be much pleased to hear how you explain the connection between education and discord in married life," cried the lawyer, with a faint smile.

The merchant was going to assert something when the lady interrupted him with the words:

"No, those times are gone for ever."

The lawyer, however, stopped her by exclaiming, "Please let him explain his meaning!"

"Folly arises from education," affirmed the merchant dogmatically.

"They unite in marriage persons who do not love one another, and then they are amazed that such couples do not live happily," hastily broke in the lady, turning to look at the lawyer, at me, and also at the clerk, who, having risen from his seat, was leaning on the back of it, smiling and listening to the debate. "It is only animals you can treat in that way," she went on, with the evident intention of stinging the merchant, "coupling them as their owner thinks fit. But men and women have their own desires and loves."

"You ought not to talk like that, madam," the merchant remarked: "an animal is a beast, but law has been bestowed on man."

"Yes, but how is one to live with a man if one has no love for him?" queried the lady, apparently in haste to utter ideas she probably believed were extremely original.

"No heed was given to such things in olden

times," the merchant asserted in a solemn peremptory tone; "it is only nowadays they have come into fashion. The moment the slightest difficulty occurs, the wife bridles up with her 'I won't live with you.' The very peasants have adopted the new mode and are behaving accordingly. 'Here,' cries a rustic's wife, 'here! take your blouses and your trinkets, I'll go off with Jack. He has a better head of hair than you.' Talk about miracles happening after that! The first and main thing that should be required in a woman is fear."

The clerk looked at the lawyer, at the lady, and at me, keeping a smile in reserve and preparing either to ridicule or to approve the merchant's argument, according to the reception it had.

"What sort of fear?" the lady asked.

"The sort implied by the words: 'And she

shall fear her husband.' That's the sort of fear."

"Those ages are long since past, my good fellow," exclaimed the lady with some bitterness.

"No, madam, those ages can't pass away. As Eve, the woman, was originally created from the man's rib, so will she remain to the end of time." The old man uttered these words solemnly, shaking his head so victoriously that the clerk at once resolved that the victory would be on his side, and so burst out laughing.

"Yes, that's the way you men argue the point," declared the lady, reluctant to surrender, and looking away. "You grant yourselves freedom, whilst you want to keep us women behind bolts and bars. You take jolly good care, I'm certain, to allow yourselves every freedom."

" Nobody gives us permission. A man, you know, brings no offspring into a house by misconduct outside it. But a woman, a wife, you see, is a frail vessel."

The emphasis and seriousness with which the merchant delivered himself of these opinions clearly had a strong persuasive effect on his audience. Even the lady was conscious of defeat. But she refused to surrender.

" Yes, but I think nevertheless you will admit that a woman is a human being, possessing feeling just like a man. Now, what is she to do if she does not love her husband? "

" If she does not love her husband? " wrathfully repeated the merchant, moving his eyebrows and his lips simultaneously. " Don't be afraid, she'll learn to love him! " This unexpected argument particularly took the

clerk's fancy and he made an inarticulate noise signifying approval.

"Oh, but she won't learn to love him," the lady declared; "and if love is wanting, no force can produce it."

"Well, but if a woman has proved unfaithful to her husband, what then?" the lawyer asked.

"It has not to be taken at all into account," answered the old man. "You should always take proper measures to prevent it."

"Yes, but if it should occur despite your measures (it's a fact that it does happen) what then?"

"Wherever else it may happen, it is unknown in our circles," the merchant replied.

All fell silent. The clerk changed his place, moved a trifle nearer and, seemingly not desiring to be behind the others, began with a smile:

"Yes, well here is a scandalous affair that occurred among our people and difficult to explain too.' She was an odd woman, a loose kind, you know. And she went in for pranks, I tell you. Her husband was a good enough kind of man in his way and had all his wits about him. She began larking with the shop-boy. Her husband tried to stop it and make her keep straight by gentle talk and advice; but she wouldn't give in. She did any number of queer things, that woman. She got to such a point that she made no bones about stealing his money; then he beat her. And what do you fancy came of it? She got worse and worse and ran off at last with an unbaptised fellow—a Jew. Now what was her husband to do, I ask you? He renounces her altogether, and now he's living a bachelor's life and she's going from bad to worse."

"Because he's a fool!" the old man blazed

out. "If he had effectually stopped her at the very beginning, if he had given her a thorough good taming, I'll bet she'd be living with him to-day. Never let them have their own way, from the very outset. 'Don't trust your horse in the field nor your wife in the home,' as the proverb goes."

The guard came in at this point in the conversation to collect tickets for the next station. The old man gave up his.

"Yes, sir, women must be tamed in time, otherwise all's lost."

"But how do you reconcile that with what you yourself said a short time ago about what the men did at the Kunavin Fair?" I inquired, unable to keep silence any longer.

"Oh, that's a different thing altogether," he answered and said no more.

The shrill whistle of the engine was soon

afterwards heard and he rose, pulled out a bag from under the seat, drew his fur coat more closely round him; and, slightly raising his cap, left the carriage to take his place on the small platform near the break.

II

He had hardly left when the talk began again, several people speaking at the same time.

"There goes an old patriarch," cried the clerk.

"The embodiment of tyrannical home rule," the lady ejaculated. "What a barbarous idea of women and marriage!"

"Yes, we're still far from European views on marriage," the lawyer remarked.

"The most curious thing about such men," the lady went on, "is that they don't understand that marriage without love is no marriage, that the only thing that can sanctify marriage is love, and that the only true marriage is that sanctified by love."

The clerk listened and smiled, wishing to impress on his memory for future use as many cultured observations as possible. In the middle of the lady's argument a noise was heard as of suppressed laughter or smothered sobbing, and turning, we perceived my neighbour, the grey-haired, lonesome man with the brilliant eyes, who, during the conversation, which obviously interested him, had moved quite near us without being noticed. He was standing with his arms leaning on the back of the seat, and he seemed much agitated, his face being quite red and the nervous twitching of the facial muscles painfully apparent.

"What sort of love d'you mean—the love that sanctifies marriage?" he stuttered.

Observing the state of agitation in which he addressed her, the lady put as much

gentleness and clearness into her answer as she could.

"Real, true love," she explained. "If such exists between man and woman, marriage is possible."

"Yes, but what are we to understand by real, true love?" insisted the man with the glittering eyes, smiling awkwardly and betraying exceeding timidity as he put the query.

"Surely, everybody knows what is meant by love!" the lady ejaculated.

"I don't," he rejoined. "You should define what you mean by——"

"Why, it's very simple," replied the lady, who, however, became thoughtful and silent for a few moments. Then continuing; "What is love?" she repeated. "Love is the preference of one individual for another to the exclusion of everybody else."

"Preference for how long? For a month? For two days? Or for half an hour?" he laughed.

"It's clear you have something else in your mind," said the lady

"No, I'm talking about the same thing as you."

"The lady maintains," the advocate interjected, "that marriage should be the result in the first place of affection (call it love, if you like) and that if such a feeling exists, then and not otherwise is marriage sanctified, as it were. In the second place she holds that every marriage not based upon this natural affection (or love, if you prefer the word) is wanting in the element which makes it morally binding. Have I interpreted you correctly?" he asked, turning to the lady.

By a nod of the head she intimated approval of the lawyer's explanation.

"In the next place——" the lawyer went on; but the nervous man, with the brilliant eyes, which now looked like two coals of fire, was clearly unable to control himself any longer, for, interrupting the lawyer's speech, he began:

"No, I'm speaking of exactly the same thing, the predilection of one person for another. But I ask, how long is the predilection to last?"

"How long? A long time, sometimes a whole life," replied the lady, shrugging her shoulders.

"Yes, but that's only in novels: in life it's never like that. In life the preference of one person for another very rarely endures for years. It is generally for months, and sometimes for weeks, for days, for hours," he exclaimed, evidently aware he was startling us all, and satisfied with it.

"Oh, how can you say such a thing? 'No, but—— Pardon me, but——" all three of us started at once. Even the clerk made some sound of disapproval.

"Yes, I know," he cried loudly, "you're talking of what is supposed to be, whereas I'm speaking of what is. Every man feels what's called love for every pretty woman."

"Oh, it's horrible to say such things. It's sure there's such a feeling as love, love that's given us not for months or years, but for our lives. Isn't that so?" the lady demanded.

"Certainly not. Even though we grant a man may conceive a preference for a certain woman and it lasts all his life, it's most extremely probable the woman's preference will be for somebody else. It has always been so and so it will continue in this world of ours." Having thus delivered himself he

took out his cigarette-case and began smoking.

"It may be reciprocal," the lawyer suggested.

"No, it can't be," was the reply. "Just as in a cartload of peas, no two peas will lie exactly side by side. Moreover, we're not dealing now with simple improbabilities, one of the fixed elements of the question is satiation. To say that you can love one person your whole life is like saying that one candle will go on burning as long as you live." With this remark he eagerly drew in the smoke of his cigarette.

"You're speaking of another kind of love," objected the lady. "Don't you admit the existence of love based on the identity of ideals, on spiritual affinity?"

"Identity of ideals!" he repeated, uttering his peculiar noise. "But in that case

there's no reason why they should sleep together (excuse this coarseness). The notion of people sleeping together because their ideals are identical!" And he laughed nervously.

"Permit me to point out," interposed the lawyer, "that the facts are entirely against you. We observe that marriages exist, that all mankind, or at least the great majority, contract matrimony, and that many people live honourably during a long married life."

The grey-haired passenger laughed again.

"You hold," he remarked, "that marriages are founded on love. But when I utter my doubts about the existence of any but physical love, you start proving the existence of love by pointing to the existence of marriages. Marriage nowadays is nothing but deceit."

"I beg your pardon," declared the lawyer,

"all I state is that marriages have existed and still exist."

"Marriages exist! Yes, but why do they exist? They existed and still exist among those nations who perceive something mysterious, something sacramental in marriage, a sacrament which has binding force in God's sight. Among such nations marriages do indeed exist but not among us. In this country people contract matrimony who see in marriage nothing of the kind, and the result is deceit or violence. If deceit, it is the more easily endured. The husband and wife only deceive others, leading them to imagine they're living in true marriage, whereas they're living in polygamy and polyandry. That's bad: it's endurable however. But when, as is more often the case, husband and wife have assumed the outward obligation of living together as long as life lasts, and yet

from the second month of marriage already hate each other, and though anxiously desirous to separate, yet continue to live together: life at length becomes a fearful hell, from which they endeavour to escape by drinking themselves to death, by blowing out their brains, by poisoning and killing themselves and one another."

He spoke quickly, letting no one interpose a word, and became more and more excited as he spoke.

We kept silent, feeling uncomfortable.

" Undoubtedly critical incidents do occur in married life," the lawyer admitted, at last breaking the awkward silence, with the purpose of ending the discussion, which was growing unduly warm.

" I perceive you know who I am," said the grey-haired man quietly and it seemed calmly.

" No, I have not the pleasure."

"Well, the pleasure is not great. I am Pozdnisheff, the person to whom happened that 'critical incident' to which you refer, the incident that consisted in his killing his wife," he cried, looking hastily at each of us in turn. As none of us hit upon any observation proper to such an occasion, we were silent.

"Well, it's all the same," he continued, making that curious noise to which he was addicted. "Anyhow, I beg your pardon. Ah! I won't embarrass you any longer with my presence!"

"But not at all, don't think of such a thing, not at all!" the lawyer broke in, not knowing precisely what he meant by "not at all." Pozdnisheff, however, paid no heed to what he said, and turning round went back to his seat. The gentleman began to talk to the lady in whispers.

III

I SAT opposite Pozdnisheff, but since I could not think of anything sensible to say and it was too dark to read, I shut my eyes and pretended a wish to sleep. Thus we remained till the next station, where the gentleman and lady got into another carriage after previously arranging with the guard. The clerk, having made himself comfortable on his seat, had fallen asleep. Pozdnisheff was smoking and drinking tea the whole time, the tea he had made at the previous station. As soon as I opened my eyes and looked about me he addressed me with a determined manner and an irritated voice:

"Perhaps it's disagreeable to you to sit

near me, now that you know who I am. If so, I'll go away."

"Not at all. Please don't imagine such a thing."

"Well, then, can I offer you some? It's rather strong, I fear." He poured me out some tea.

"They talk but what they say is all falsehood——"

"To what are you alluding?" I asked.

"To the same topic of course, to that love of theirs and its nature. You are not sleepy?"

"No, not at all."

"Well, I'll tell you if you like how it was I was induced by that same love to do what I did?"

"Certainly, if the attempt is not too painful for you——"

"By no means. To keep silence is painful.

Have some more tea? Or is it too strong for you?"

The tea was indeed very strong, it was almost like beer; but I drank a glass of it. Just then the conductor passed through the carriage; Pozdnisheff scowled and did not commence till he had left.

"Well, then, I'll tell you the story. But are you really certain you'd like to hear it?"

I assured him I wanted to very much. He was silent a moment, then rubbed his face with his hands and started:

"Before marriage I lived like all other men in our social stratum. I'm a landowner, a Candidate of the University, and at one time was a Marshal of the Nobles. Till I married I lived like everybody else, that is to say, not morally, and, like other men in my sphere of life, thought that by living in that way I was doing my duty. I believed myself a model

and that I was a thoroughly moral man. Not being a seducer nor having depraved tastes, I did not make pleasure the chief object of life, like many men of my own age and rank. I sinned moderately, decently, for the sake of health. I avoided women who, by conceiving a strong attachment for me, might entangle me in any way. For aught I know, there may possibly have been attachments, but I acted as if they did not exist. And not only did I consider this to be moral conduct, but I was positively proud of it."

Here he abruptly stopped and made that strange sound which he always apparently did when a fresh thought came to him.

" It was this," he resumed, " that constituted the vileness of my behaviour. It is not anything physical that matters: what is wrong is the exemption of oneself from all moral relations when intimacy exists. And it was pre-

cisely this exemption of myself from moral ties that I held to be my especial merit. I remember how dreadfully I suffered once when I had failed to acknowledge by a money present a woman who had most probably fallen in love with me. Nor did I recover my usual serenity till I had forwarded her money and so made it clear to her that I thought myself quite untrammelled by any sort of moral obligation.

"You needn't shake your head as if you agreed with me," he suddenly ejaculated. "I know the trick well. Every man, and you among the others, unless you are a very rare exception, shares these same views. It's all the same, however. Forgive me," he went on, "but the fact is that all this is very awful."

"What is awful?" I queried.

"The abyss of delusions in which we live in respect of women and our relations to them

Yes, I can't speak calmly of it, not because of the 'incident,' as he called it, which occurred to me in connection with it, but because ever since it occurred my eyes have been opened and I view things in a quite different light. Everything is turned inside out, yes, inside out."

He lit a cigarette and resting his elbows on his knees continued. In the darkness I could not distinguish his face. I could but hear, high above the clank and noise of the train, the sound of his impressive, pleasant voice.

IV

" YES, it was only after I had been tormented to agony and thanks to the torture and agony, that I perceived where the root of the evil lay. It is only since I have learned what ought to be that I realised so completely the foulness of what is.

" Let me tell you now when and how those circumstances began which led up to that ghastly episode in my life. I was not quite sixteen when I took the first step on the deadly path. It happened when I was still a pupil at the Gymnasium and my elder brother a freshman at the University. I had

before never known a woman, but all the same I had no more claim to be called innocent than any of the unhappy children in our social sphere. For nearly two years before my soul had been defiled by my comrades and the mere thought of woman (not of any particular woman, but of woman in general) tormented me already.

" My thoughts, when alone, were accordingly no longer pure. I was horrified, I was in agonies, I prayed and I fell. I had therefore been already corrupted in imagination. I was perishing alone and had not yet laid violent hands upon other human beings in order to involve them in my downfall.

" It was during this crisis that a friend of my brother's, also a student, a gay youth and what is usually termed a real good fellow (that is, a worthless scoundrel), who had

taught us to drink and to gamble, induced us one night after a drinking bout to go *there*. And we went. My brother, too, was innocent till then and fell the same night. I, a simple stripling of sixteen, fell likewise, not realising what I did.

" I had never been told by any of my elders that what I was doing was wrong. And, what is more, even now, boys of the present generation are never told. True, it may be found in the Decalogue, but then the Decalogue only exists to be repeated by heart at examinations in schools and universities and even then is not very necessary, assuredly not at all as indispensable as the grammatical rule that the Latin particle ' ut ' is to be used in the conditional clauses of a sentence. At any rate, I never was told by any of my elders whose opinion I respected, that what I was doing was wrong. I heard, on the contrary,

from people whom I respected that I was doing quite right. I was informed that, once done, my struggles and agonisings would disappear. I had both heard and read this. I had not been informed by my elders I was doing wrong. The men I knew considered their conduct a kind of heroism, as it were; so that, on the whole, it was evident it could have only good effects. Had I any dread of bad effects? Even that had been foreseen and a paternal Government had taken thought for it. Salaried doctors are engaged to look after such matters. That is as it ought to be. It's the doctors who lay down what is indispensable to good health and it's they who sanction the system of conduct. I personally know mothers who take measures exactly as the doctors direct in such matters. It's science that's responsible."

"Why science?" I inquired.

"Who are doctors," he replied, "but the high-priests of science? Who demoralises our youth by laying down what is indispensable to good health? And then, putting on airs of ineffable self-importance, they set about curing complaints."

"Why should they not cure complaints?" I asked.

"Because if the one-hundredth part of the energies expended on cure had been directed to the extirpation of indulgence, such complaints would have disappeared long ago. But no. All those energies are employed, not for the object of rooting out evil, but with the express object of encouraging it, of guaranteeing those practising it from the risks of evil accompanying it. That, however, is not the point I was driving at. What I wanted to underline is the fact that what happened to me is exactly what

happens to nine-tenths, if not more, of the members, not only of our own social stratum, but of all classes and conditions of our society, not excepting even peasants. I fell without even the pretext that I was giving way to natural love. No. It was not love that made me fall. I fell merely because those persons among whom I lived considered that which constituted my fall, some as a legitimate, useful act, others as a most natural and not simply excusable, but perfectly innocent amusement for a young man to indulge in. As for myself, I had not a suspicion I had done anything which could be properly described as a fall. I only began to yield myself up to what was partly a pleasure and partly, I was assured, a necessity, even as I had taken to drink and smoke. Yet in this first sin there was something strange, something pathetic. I remember the

very moment I had sinned I was overcome with sadness, and I felt I should like to sit down and cry. Yes, I could have cried over the loss of my innocence, over the wrong I had done which no centuries could ever cleanse.

"I could never hope again to look upon woman in the simple, natural way characteristic of the pure and innocent. Even as the opium-eater, the drunkard and the immoderate smoker are not normal, so is he who has fallen as I did. He is a tainted, corrupted man. Just as an opium-eater or a drunkard is easily recognisable by his face, his gait, his manner, so too, is such a man as I became. He may succeed in maintaining a certain self-command, in repressing revealing movements and looks that have become spontaneous. In a word, he may still struggle with himself and his bent, but he can never reacquire those simple, clear.

pure relations with womankind, relations as of a brother to a sister.

" I became a voluptuary, and remained so. And it worked my destruction."

V

"I SANK deeper and deeper after this in the mire. And yet what I am recalling is what *I* did; I who was a perpetual butt for the contemptuous jibes of my companions because of my relative 'innocence.' What if you heard of the doings of the gilded youth, of army officers, of 'Parisians'! And still all these persons, including myself, when we were profligates of thirty, our souls tainted with hundreds of multiform crimes, how often have we entered a drawing-room or ball-room, spruce and neat, clean, new-shaven, perfumed, in spotless linen and irreproachable evening-dress or faultless uniform—as models of purity! How delightful!

"'Just think a moment what ought to be and compare it with what really is. What ought to be is this. When a person of such a kind in society approaches my sister or daughter, I, knowing his life, ought to walk up to him, take him aside, and, speaking in a whisper, say: 'Friend, I know the sort of life you lead, how you pass your nights and with whom. This is no suitable place for you. Here there are virgin, innocent girls. Be off!' That is what ought to happen. What really does is this. When such a person appears and dances with my sister or daughter, encircling her waist with his arm, we laugh at it if he is wealthy and has influential friends. Shameful! How long shall we have to wait for the day when this accursed state of things, this tissue of damnable falsehoods shall be at last exposed and exploded?"

He again uttered his peculiar sounds sev-

eral times running and again drank tea. The tea, I must confess, was excessively strong and there was no water at hand with which to dilute it. I felt violently stimulated by the two glasses I had drunk. It no doubt affected him also in a similar manner; for the more tea he drank, the more vehement he grew. His voice sounded more and more resonant and expressive, he was continually changing position, now putting on his cap, now taking it off, and his face appeared to undergo extraordinary transfigurations in the increasing darkness.

"Thus I lived," he continued, "till I was thirty, never for a moment abandoning my intention to marry, settle down and lead the chastest, most perfect family life imaginable. With this purpose in view, I carefully looked out for a suitable young girl. I looked about critically for a girl whose purity would qualify

her to aspire to the honour of being my wife I slighted and rejected several because, forsooth, they were not spotless enough for me. But at last the search was successful. I discovered a person whom I considered worthy of me.

"She was one of the two daughters of a landowner of Penza, once a rich man, but who, at that time, was ruined and in embarrassed circumstances. She and I had been boating together one evening, and when night came on and we were returning lighted by the soft beams of the moon, as I sat beside her admiring her pretty curls and her well-shaped figure, becomingly revealed in a well-fitting jersey; I decided suddenly she was the very person. I imagined that night she understood everything I felt and thought, and that what I felt and thought was extremely exalted. In point of fact, at the root of my fancy lay her

curls and her jersey, which fitted her wonderfully well, and the desire for closer proximity.

"What a strange delusion it is to fancy beauty is goodness! A beautiful woman speaks nonsense. We listen and hear not the nonsense, but wise ideas. She utters, she does hateful things, and still we're only conscious of something pleasurable. If she abstains from absurd or odious words and acts, and if to boot she is beautiful, we are at once convinced she is a paragon of wisdom and morality. As for me, I returned home in ecstasies, resolved she was the acme of moral perfection and therefore worthy of being my wife. Next day I proposed.

"What a ridiculous farrago of ideas! Out of a thousand men who marry, not only in our own social rank, but also unhappily among the common people, there is hardly one who, like Don Juan, has not been married before

innumerable times. True, I hear, there are now, and I have personal experience of what I state, chaste young men who feel and know that chastity is no laughing matter but a most vital affair. May God help them! But in my generation there was not one such in ten thousand. Everyone is quite well aware that this is the normal condition of things and yet everyone pretends to believe it is absolutely different.

"All novels teem with detailed accounts of the feelings of their heroes and the appearance of the lakes and trees about which they wander. But when their love for a young maiden is dwelt on, no mention whatever is made concerning the previous adventures of the interesting hero. Or if there are such novels, they are never put in the hands of the persons most concerned in knowing these things, namely young girls. A pretence is made at first to

them that the wickedness which consumes half the life of a man in our towns and villages does not exist at all. We grow so used to this hypocrisy in time that we positively begin to imagine we are all moral persons and live in a moral world. The girls, poor things, believe it quite seriously. It was likewise the belief of my unfortunate wife. I showed her my diary before our marriage, which contained entries from which she could get a glimpse of certain incidents in my former life, particularly of my last liaison, which I thought advisable to let her know about, for fear it should be told her by others. I well remember the horror, the despair, the amazement she felt when she knew and realised what had taken place. I saw she wanted to break off all relations with me immediately."

"And what prevented her from doing so?" I asked.

He emitted again that curious sound of his, remained silent and had some tea.

"Anyhow it's better like that, yes, it's better like that," he cried. "It serves me right."

VI

" THAT however is not the point. What I desired to say is that the only persons who are genuinely deceived in all this are the unhappy girls. The mothers, corrupted by their husbands, perceive it all and, feigning a belief in the purity of men, act in a way wholly incongruous with such a belief. They know with what bait to catch men for themselves and their daughters.

" It is we men alone who do not know it, and we're ignorant simply because we don't want to know. Women are well aware that what is usually called sublime, poetic love depends not on moral qualities but on continual meetings, on the style in which the hair is

dressed, on the colour and cut of a costume. Ask an experienced coquette who is eagerly bent upon fascinating a man, which of the two dangers she would rather incur, that of being convicted of deceit, callousness, or even immoral behaviour in the presence of the man she is trying to attract, or that of appearing before him in a badly cut, ugly dress. She will prefer the former without hesitation. Because she knows well men are continually lying about exalted sentiments, that what they really desire is simply the woman herself, that they therefore freely condone every kind of bad conduct, but they will never forgive a dress badly cut, hideously trimmed or suggestive of *mauvais ton*. Every coquette is keenly aware of it, every innocent maid is unconsciously aware of it. Hence those hateful jerseys, those bare shoulders, arms, and almost exposed breasts.

Women, especially those who have passed through the masculine school are conscious of the fact that conversations on lofty subjects are simply hollow phrases, that the object of a man's desire is the person, and whatever reveals it in its most alluring aspect. And they act in strict harmony with the knowledge.

"If only we could cast aside the familiarity with abominable conventions which has become second nature to us and contemplate life among the upper classes as it genuinely is, we should find it absolutely disgraceful. You don't agree with me? I'll prove it to you," he asserted, interrupting me.

"You contend that women of our social rank live for interests different from those which play a part in the lives of prostitutes; but I assure you it is not so and I will make good my assertion.

"If people differ entirely in their aims in

life, in the meanings they ascribe to human existence, that difference will be certainly reflected in their outward behaviour, and their outward appearance will be as different as their views. Consider now the unhappy, despised sisterhood of fallen women and compare them with the ladies of the highest society. What do you notice? The same toilets, the same costumes, the same perfumes, the same nudity of arms and shoulders, the same passion for jewellery, for expensive, glittering ornaments, the same pleasures, dances, music, and song. And even as the former class of women use all these things for the object of seduction, so likewise do the latter. There is no difference whatever between them."

VII

"So I was caught by those jerseys and curls. It was easy to capture me, since I had been reared under conditions tending to breed young lovers, somewhat as cucumbers are forced in hot-houses. Reflect on our exciting, superfluous food, combined as it is with utter physical inactivity.

"You may wonder or you may not wonder, just as you please, but so it is. I did not myself discover this until quite lately. And it gives me deep suffering to think nobody is aware of it now and that people therefore give vent to such absurdities as those which that lady expressed a short time ago.

"A number of peasants were working in our

neighbourhood last spring on a railway embankment. The customary food of a strong peasant engaged in light field labour is bread, *quas*, onions, and it keeps him alive, active, and healthy. When he enters the service of a railway company his food is porridge and a pound of meat every day. This meat he expends in the shape of sixteen hours' labour, driving a wheelbarrow of thirty poods, which is just about as much as he can do. We, on the contrary, eat game, meat, and fish, besides various other kinds of heating food and drink Now, may I ask what becomes of all this? It produces excesses, abnormal excitation, which, passing through the prism of our artificial lives, takes the form of falling in love.

"So I fell in love, as all men do, and none of the characteristic features of that condition were wanting. Ecstasies, affection and poetry were all there, in semblance at anyrate;

but my love was in reality the outcome of the contrivances of the mamma and the dress-maker on the one hand, and good dinners and idleness on the other. "If there had been on the one hand, no boating excursions, no dress-makers to contrive wasp-like waists, and so on; if my wife had been dressed in a plain gown and stopped at home; and if, on the other hand, I had been leading a normal existence, I should not have fallen in love and all that occurred afterwards and in consequence, would never have taken place."

VIII

"As things were, however, my state of mind, the charming dress, and the excursion in the boat contributed to make the business a success. It had failed before twenty times over: it succeeded this time and I fell into what may be called a sort of trap.

"I am not jesting when I declare that marriages in our generation are arranged like traps. What is there natural about them? A girl grows up and has to be married. It appears quite a simple problem on the face of it, particularly if she is not a scarecrow; and there are enough men desiring to marry. In former days it was plain sailing. The girl became of age and the parents arranged the

match. It's still so now with the Chinese, Indians, Mahometans, the lower classes of Russians: in fact, with ninety-nine hundredths of humanity. It remained for the one-hundredth part or even less of degraded humanity to find out that it was not the proper method of solving the problem and to devise a new one. What are the main characteristics of the new system? The girls sit at home and the young men go, to the market as it were, and choose from them, whilst the girls anxiously wait and think, but do not dare to say outright, 'Please take me, dear! Oh, do take me: not her, but me, please! Look what shoulders I have got!' And meanwhile, we men stroll up and down, scanning them and feeling quite self-satisfied, each saying to himself, 'I know very well I shan't be taken in.' And so we stroll up and down, delighted at everything being so nicely arranged, when one of us

suddenly trips up, falls and is caught in the trap."

"But what would you do?" I asked. "You wouldn't surely wish the girls to propose to the men?"

"I truly don't know what I want; I only feel if there is to be equality let it be real equality.

"If match-making by professional match-makers is discovered to be degrading, our system is a thousand times more degrading; because in the former case the rights and chances are equal on both sides, whereas in the latter case the woman is either a slave for sale in the market or else a mere decoy.

"Tell a mother or her daughter the plain truth, namely, that all her schemes converge to the one aim of catching a husband. Goodness! what an insult it would be! And yet they all do it and there's nothing else for them to do. It's especially ghastly to see sometimes

very young, poor, innocent girls thus occupied. Deplorable as all this is, if it were, at least, done openly, above-board, it would be a different matter; but as a fact it's all deceit.

"'Ah, "The Origin of Species"—how interesting!' a mother will cry. 'Oh, Lily is so much devoted to painting!' 'And you, do you think of going to the exhibition?' 'How instructive!' 'Driving in a troïka!' 'The play!' 'The concert!' 'Oh! how marvellous!' 'Lily is simply mad on music!' 'And you, how is it you don't share these beliefs?' 'Boating parties!—ah! boating parties!'

"The idea underlying all such ejaculations is the same. Put into words it amounts to this: 'Take me, do, please, take me!' 'Take my Lily!' 'No, take me, dear!' Oh, disgusting! damnable lying!" And having finished the rest of his tea, he began removing the cups and vessels

IX

"YES," he went on, putting his tea and sugar in a bag, "that is the cause of the ascendency of women from which the whole world is suffering."

"How d'you mean the ascendency of women?" I queried. "All rights and privileges belong to the man."

"Yes, yes: exactly what I was going to say," he broke in. "It gives us the clue to the curious circumstance that while, on the one side, women are reduced to the lowest point of humiliation, on the other they are all-powerful. In that respect their position is entirely analogous to that of the Jews. As these compensate for their oppression by gaining influence and

power in other ways, so do women. "'Oh!' the Jews seem to say, 'you command us to be mere tradesmen! Very good; we then, as tradesmen, shall win ascendency over you.' 'Ah! you command us to be simply instruments of pleasure!' exclaim the women. 'Very well; we shall subjugate you.'

"The refusal of woman's rights does not consist in her disqualification to vote, to occupy a seat on the bench, to take part in the direction of these or those affairs; but in her inferiority to man in all social acts and functions that are founded on the relations between the sexes. For instance it's not in her power to select her husband; she must wait to be selected by him.

"You affirm it would be monstrous to confer these rights on her? Very good; then let the men be deprived of them. They are at present a monopoly for men; and therefore in order to compensate herself for the loss of such

rights, woman plays upon the senses of man, and through his senses so entirely subjugates him that his right of selection dwindles to a mere formality. In reality it is she who chooses; and when she has once mastered this method of conquest she abuses it, and gains a fearful power over men."

"But in what does this marvellous power show itself?" I asked.

"In everything everywhere," he replied. "For instance pass by the shops, in any large town. It is impossible to estimate the wealth displayed in the windows or to gauge the amount of man's labour that produced it. Inspect them and in nine-tenths of those shops you'll find nothing intended for the use of the male members of the community. The whole trade in the luxuries of life is brought into existence and supported by the requirements of women. Consider the factories. By far the

greater number turn out useless adornments, equipages, furniture, toys—for women. Millions of people, generations of slaves, rot in the penal servitude of the factories only in order to gratify the caprice of woman. Women, like empresses, condemn nine-tenths of mankind to prison and hard labour.

"Such is the form taken by their revenge on us men for having debased them and robbed them of equal rights. All their tricks and stratagems are intended to influence the immoral part of our nature and so allure us into the nets they have spread. Yes, that is the root of the abnormal condition of things I've described. Woman has changed herself into an object of pleasure of such awful effect that a man can't calmly approach her. As soon as a man draws near a woman he yields to the power of her magic, and his senses are straightway paralysed. Even in former days I

always felt ill at ease in the presence of a lady arrayed in all the magnificence of ball-dress. At present I absolutely shudder at the sight, because I recognise in it a palpable danger to people in general, a danger which has no legal right to exist. I feel prompted to summon a policeman, to ask for protection against the peril that menaces me and insist on its removal or abolition.

"It makes you laugh," he exclaimed all at once, turning to me, "does it? But it's no laughing matter, I can assure you. A time will come, and it may come very soon, when people will understand it and ask themselves wonderingly how it was possible for a society to continue in which acts like those I've just described, full of danger to the public peace, were allowed. Can it be pretended for a moment that the adorning of the human body at which society connives in women and which

is directly intended to excite passion, is without social danger? It is as if you were to set traps and spread nets in the streets and public walks, in the highways and by-ways. No, it is even worse. Why is it, I ask, that games of chance are prohibited, whilst women tricked out in meretricious costumes are not prohibited? And yet the latter are a thousand times more dangerous than the former."

X

"In that way I also was captured. I was what is called in love. Not only did I represent her to myself as the dream of perfection, but the whole time I was paying her my addresses I imagined myself likewise a pattern of what a man should be. As a truth, the world does not hold a villain of however deep a dye who, if he only made a careful search, would not find another villain worse in some ways than himself and a cause therefore for feeling proud of himself and satisfied.

"It was my case. I did not marry for money. Greed of lucre played no part in my choice, as it did in that of the majority of my acquaintances who married on account of their

wife's dowry or powerful friends. I was rich, she was poor. That was one consideration. Another fact in which I took equal pride was that others married with the deliberate resolution to continue the irregular lives they had led before marriage. I, on the other hand had firmly resolved to be faithful to my wife after marriage and there were no limits to the high conceit I had of myself as a result. Yes, for this I plumed myself on being an angel.

" I was engaged only for a brief period and still I can't recall it without shame. What an abomination it was! The love that joined us was thought to be of a spiritual nature. But if our love and meditations had been of a spiritual nature, all the words, phrases, and talks we had together should have expressed it. As a truth nothing of the sort took place. We found it very hard to converse when left alone,

it was a toil of Sisyphus. I would think of something to say, say it, relapse into silence and then rack my head for something else. There was nothing whatever to talk about. All the subjects connected with the new life that awaited us, to our future plans, had already been discussed; and what more was there to say? If we had been animals, we should have known at least we were not expected to talk; but not being only animals we were compelled to speak, although there was nothing whatever to speak about. Add to this the disgraceful custom of eating sweets and dinners, and all those other disgusting preparations for marriage, usual under the circumstances, such as discussions about lodgings, morning attire for my wife, morning clothes for myself, linen, toilet, and so on.

"Of course, if people united in marriage in harmony with the laws and counsels of the

Fathers of the early Russian Church, as the old merchant here this afternoon insisted they should, down mattresses, the dowry, the bed and bedstead and such things would sink to the level of simple details connected with the Sacrament. But in this country, where there is hardly one who believes, in ten who enter into matrimony, I do not assert in the reality of the Sacrament, but in the quality of the union to engender something in the nature of an obligation: where there is hardly one in a hundred men who has not been virtually married already, or one in fifty who does not intend to commit infidelities whenever a favourable opportunity occurs: in this country, I declare, the majority regard the church ceremonies as neither more nor less than a condition, the fulfilment of which enables them to possess a certain woman."

XI

"THUS it is everybody marries, thus it was I married. Then commenced the much belauded phase called the honeymoon. What bathos there is in the name itself!

"Wandering about Paris one day," he said, "looking at the various shows and spectacles, I saw a sign-board with the effigy of a bearded woman and a walrus. I went in to look and discovered the bearded woman was only a man in a low-cut woman's dress and the sea-monster an ordinary dog covered with a walrus' skin swimming about in a bath full of water. The whole affair was highly boring. As I left, the showman deferentially escorted me, and addressing the public who were out-

side the door, he pointed to me and spoke, 'You can ask this gentleman whether the show is worth looking at. Walk in, walk in! One franc a head.' I was ashamed to say it was not worth looking at and the showman certainly relied on my feeling so. It is probably the same with those who have gone through all the inanities of the honeymoon, and refuse to disabuse others. I did not myself disabuse anybody, but I don't see why I shouldn't tell the truth now. I feel it indeed urgent to announce the truth about it.

"The truth is, it was tiresome, wretched, and above all boring, inconceivably boring. It reminded me in some degree of the feelings I had when I was learning to smoke years ago, when the nausea in my inside threatened sickness and my mouth was filling with saliva, which I hastily swallowed, trying to look as if the experience was enjoyable."

"You're speaking strangely about honeymoons," I observed. "How are you going to continue the human species if you assume that the fact of two persons living together causes such nausea?"

"Oh, yes, what's to be done?" Why, the human species might perish," he maliciously repeated, as though he had been expecting this conscientious and familiar objection. "Preach abstention from child-bearing, so that English lords may always be provided with the wherewithal to grow fat and nobody will reproach you. But merely suggest the advisability of abstention from child-bearing in the name of morality, and, great goodness! what an outcry there will be!

"But I hope you'll excuse me. That light up there is unpleasant to me," he said, pointing to the lantern. "Have you any objection to my drawing the shade round it?" On my

answering it was entirely indifferent to me, he rose hurriedly—as he did everything,—stood up on the seat and drew the woollen shade over the lantern.

"Still," I objected, "if every one were to accept such doctrine as a rule of practical conduct, the human species would quickly cease to be."

He did not reply at once.

"You wish to know how the human species is to continue?" he said, reseating himself opposite me, stretching out his feet widely apart and resting his elbows on his knees. "Why should the human species continue?" he asked.

"Why?" I exclaimed, "because otherwise we shouldn't be alive."

"But why should we be?"

"Why should we? In order to live, of course."

"Well, but why should we live? If there be no purpose, no object, if life is given us for life's sake only, there is no point in living. And if it be so, Schopenhauer and the Buddhists are absolutely right. On the other hand, if there is an aim and object in human existence, it is evident humanity must cease living when the object is attained. That is quite evident," he repeated with visible emotion, obviously thinking highly of his notion.

"Yes, that is quite evident. Now, weigh my words well. If the object for which humanity exists is happiness, goodness, love, or by whatever other name you choose to call it, if it is what the old prophets have proclaimed it to be, namely, that all men should be united in love, that their swords should be turned into ploughshares, and the rest, what prevents its accomplishment? The passions. Now of all the passions, the strongest, the most

mischievous, the most persistent, is that of the senses. Therefore if we contrive to eradicate the passions and with them this last and most powerful of them, the prophecies will come to pass. Men will be united by ties of love, the object and mission of humanity will have been accomplished, and there will be no more reason for the continued existence of the human species.

"As long as humanity exists it tends towards an ideal. And its ideal is certainly not that of rabbits which increase and multiply as much as possible. It is an ideal of goodness attainable by continence, abstemiousness, chastity. Towards this ideal we have always been and are still tending.

"Now consider the upshot of all this. Love, passion, appears as a safety valve. The present generation of men has not fulfilled the mission for which it is here on earth. Why?

Because of its passions, the most powerful of which is that of the senses. On the other hand, if this passion is not extirpated, a new generation arises and humanity enjoys the fresh possibility of arriving at the goal by the efforts of the fresh men. If they're unsuccessful, it's for the same cause and failure brings with it the possibility of success later on, and so on ad infinitum, until as the goal is reached, the prophecy comes to pass and all mankind are joined together.

"What would happen if things were otherwise? If God had created men, for instance, to the end of performing a certain mission and had made them mortal and without passions or immortal? In the former case they would live without having attained the purpose of their lives and would then die, and God would have to resort to another creative act so that the purpose in question might be fulfilled. In

the latter case, that is if men had been created immortal, let us imagine that after many thousands of years they attained the goal (a most unlikely thing to postulate, since it is far easier for new generations to correct the mistakes and alter their lines of conduct) what would be the object of their further existence? What should be done with them then? Things are obviously better as they are.

"But you dislike maybe the form in which I have expressed all this. Perhaps you are an evolutionist. But even then you can't fail to see the truth of my contention. The topmost race of animals is the human. In order to hold its own in the struggle with other races it must keep closely together, unite like a swarm of bees, and not continue ceaselessly increasing and multiplying. Like the bees it ought to rear the sexless, that is, it ought to

aim at self-restraint and not by any means help to inflame the passions, as our social life seems intended deliberately to do."

He kept silent for a time. Then he resumed:

"The human species will stop? Yes. But is it possible that anybody, no matter from what standpoint he regarded life, could ever have entertained a doubt about it? Why, it's as inevitable as death. All ecclesiastical doctrines are founded on the belief that this world will come to an end sooner or later: modern science inculcates the same doctrine. Why should we be astonished that ethics teach the same lesson?"

He ceased speaking and remained silent a considerable time, drinking and smoking. Having smoked a cigarette to the end he took several more out of his bag and began putting them in his old, stained cigarette-case.

" I understand your position," I commented, " something like that is taught by the Shakers."

" Yes, yes; and they are right," he cried. " Passion, no matter with what forms it may be glozed over, is an evil, a fearful evil, to be combated, not encouraged, as it is in our society. The words of the Gospel, ' whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,' apply not merely to other men's wives, but also and mainly to one's own wife. In this world as at present ordered the prevalent opinions are exactly contrary to this and consequently to what they ought to be. What are our wedding trips and excursions. and the isolation of a young married couple which is authorised by their elders, but a licence for unrestrained pleasure? "

XII

"But the moral law inflicts on us sooner or later condign punishment for each breaking of it. So all my endeavours to make the honeymoon a success were destined to fail. It was a period of shame, irksomeness, and it quickly became an unendurable torture.

"Things took this turn very soon. Finding one day my wife was bored—I think it was the third or fourth day after the marriage—I inquired the cause and began embracing her, this being to my mind, all she could possibly expect or wish from me. But she put my arms away and began crying. 'What's the matter?' She was unable to say, but she was clearly extremely sad and depressed. Her

nerves probably revealed to her the true nature of our relations, but she could not formulate what she instinctively felt. I went on questioning her and she murmured something about being lonely without her mother. I felt this was not true and I set about comforting her without referring at all to her mother. I didn't realise she was only depressed in mind and her mother was only a pretext. Yet she at once took offence at my not mentioning her mother, as if I did not credit what she had told me. She could now see, she said, that I didn't love her. Whereupon I blamed her for being capricious and suddenly a change came over her face. The melancholy that had settled on it gave place to an expression of irritation and she started reproaching me in the most spiteful language with being selfish and cruel. I looked intently at her. All her features combined to express utter coldness

and enmity—I might almost say hatred—for me.

"I remember the horror which then seized me. What did it mean? How could it be? Love, the union of souls! And instead of that, this was what it had come to! 'Can it be so?' I asked myself. 'Surely this is not she.'

"I tried to soothe and quiet her, but soon found myself opposed by such an impregnable wall of icy, venomous hostility, that before I knew what I was doing I was maddened into a state of violent irritation, with the result that we addressed a number of nasty remarks to each other.

"The impression left by that first quarrel of ours was unspeakable, horrible. I have termed it a quarrel, but it was in truth nothing of the sort. It was simply the discovery of the abyss that yawned between us. What we called love had been exhausted and we

stood face to face in our real mutual relations; two egoists, perfect strangers to one another.

"I have given the name of 'quarrel' to what happened. But it wasn't a quarrel. It was simply a glimpse of our true relations to each other. I did not then notice that this coldness and hostility was our usual relation to each other, because during the first period of married life those feelings were soon concealed again from our observation by the vapours of 'love,' and I assumed we had only quarrelled and grown reconciled and that no such misunderstanding would ever take place again.

"But in the first month of the honeymoon, it was not long before another period commenced, during which we again for a time ceased to be necessary to one another, and in consequence another quarrel occurred. This

second misunderstanding impressed me more deeply than the first. 'So the first was not a mere accident,' I thought to myself; 'it was the outcome of a necessity and will occur as a result of the same necessity.' Another reason why I was struck more deeply by the second quarrel was its ridiculously trivial pretext. It was something about money which I never grudged and could not dream of grudging my wife. I only recall that she put such an interpretation on the affair as to make a remark of mine appear to be the expression of a desire on my part to gain an undue ascendency over her by means of money to which she feigned that I claimed an exclusive right. The charge was baseless, stupid, mean, unnatural.

"I lost my temper and rebuked her for want of delicacy. She accused me in turn and in the expression of her face and eyes I read

the same cruel, callous hostility which had caused a chill in my heart before.

"With my father, with my brother, I had quarrelled, I remember, now and then; but there never had arisen that especially venemous hatred which had sprung up between my wife and me. It was not long, however, before our mutual hatred was once more disguised by so-called love, and I once more tried to console myself that our two quarrels were mistakes, simple misunderstandings which could easily be cleared up. But the occurrence of the third and fourth quarrels dispelled my delusion. I saw clearly that this was no accident, no misunderstanding, but the upshot of necessity, that it could not be otherwise, that it would again and again recur.

"My heart froze within me at the prospect. My suffering was yet further intensified by the

notion that I alone was living with my wife in such continual discord, so different from the way in which I used to flatter myself we should live, that others were more lucky than we. I did not then know this is the ordinary lot, that others believe their misery (as I believed mine) to be exceptional, that they not only conceal it from outsiders, but try to disguise it to themselves.

" In our case it began at once after the marriage, and went on gradually gaining in intensity and fierceness. From the very first weeks of our wedded existence I knew at the bottom of my heart I was caught in a trap, that what I had experienced was not what I had had in my mind and confidently hoped for, that my marriage, so far from being a fount of happiness, was a burden very heavy to bear. But like everyone else, I refused to admit it, not only to others (I wouldn't own

to it now if it were not ended for ever), but even to myself.

"Whenever I reflect on it now, it is a mystery to me how I could have remained blind to my actual condition. One sure token by which we might readily have recognised it was the fact that all our quarrels turned upon wretched trifles; indeed their cause was so ridiculously trivial that, once over, we could not remember how they had come about. The reasoning power was not quick enough to forge specious pretexts sufficiently quick for the outbursts of heartfelt hostility which continued to occur between us without interruption or change. Still more remarkable, however, was the inadequacy of the excuses for reconciliation. They assumed occasionally the shape of words, explanations, even tears, but at times—and the remembrance of it fills me even now with disgust—

while hurling the most injurious and venomous abuse at each other, a period of silence would presently begin, filled up with smiles, kisses, embraces."

XIII

JUST then two passengers entered the carriage and began installing themselves on the furthest seat. Pozdnisheff stopped speaking till they had at last taken their places. As soon as they were settled and the noise made by their movements had subsided, he resumed where he had left off, obviously never losing for an instant the thread of his ideas.

"What is especially revolting about all this," he went on, "is that whilst in theory, love is depicted as an ideal condition, a lofty sentiment, in practice it's a thing that can't be mentioned or called to mind without a feeling of disgust. It was not without reason nature made it so. But if it be revolting, let

it be proclaimed so without concealment. Instead of, that, however, men go about preaching and teaching that it's something glorious and lofty.

"'What,' I asked myself in amazement, 'could occasion the deadly spite we feel for one another?' And yet the cause of it was plain as day. The malignity was neither more nor less than the protest of human nature against the other nature which was crushing it in both of us. I was stupefied at our mutual hatred. And still it was impossible for us to feel anything but hatred for one another. The feeling was identical in kind with the hatred accomplices in a crime cherish towards each other, both for instigating and actually taking part in it.

"You consider perhaps I'm going away from the point? By no means. I am revealing to you the story of how I killed my wife.

At my trial they asked me with what and how I killed her. Fools that they are, to imagine I killed her with the knife on 5th October. It was not then I killed her. It was very long before, even as they're all killing their wives at this moment; all, yes, all of them."

"How?" I queried.

"It's the most extraordinary thing imaginable that nobody wants to see what is so manifest and evident, what doctors should know and impress, but about which they are persistently silent.

"The matter is so very simple. The number of women in the world is about equal to that of men. The conclusion is obvious. It is acted on by the lower animals and it needs no rare wisdom on the part of men to discover. It is, that self-restraint is indispensable. But simple as the discovery is, it has not yet been made. Science has found some

new sort of animalculæ which swim about in the blood, and a hundred other futile absurdities, but it has not yet reached the point needed for understanding this truth. At any rate you do not hear of any such doctrines being propagated by scientists.

"Accordingly a woman has only two ways out of the difficulty. The first is by once for all annihilating or destroying her faculty of becoming a mother whenever circumstances appear to require it. The second is not a way out of the difficulty at all, properly speaking. It is nothing but a direct violation of the natural laws. The woman has to nurse her child and be her husband's mistress at the same time. This is the cause in our social stratum of hysterics and nerves, and in the peasant ranks of 'possession.' So things are in Russia. Nor is it different in Europe. And women afflicted with 'possession' as well

as Prof. Charcot's female patients are in the genuine sense of the word cripples. And of such the world is full.

"It needs only brief reflection to understand how important, how sublime, is that which is happening when a woman is with child or is tending and feeding the being who will be a continuation, a substitute for, ourselves. Now, these sacred functions are interrupted; for what? And in spite of this they chatter about freedom, about woman's right. Why, the cannibals might just as well brag that they were anxious for the rights and liberty of the prisoners of war whom they feed and fatten for food."

All this was new to me and made a profound impression.

"What would you do?" I questioned. "If you're right you'll destroy the relations of husband and wife; and men, as you know—"

"Yes, I know," he interposed. "That's another of the favourite teachings of doctors, those inestimable priests of science. If I could, I would condemn these fetichists to discharge the functions of those very women they affirm to be so indispensable to men, so as to learn what then they would say on the question. Impress a man with the notion that alcohol is indispensable to him, that he cannot exist without tobacco, that opium is a necessary of life, and all such things will straightway grow indispensable. Is it to be thought God did not know what was needful to man, and that because he did not take the doctors' advice He scamped His work?

"It was a question, as you see, of reconciling two conditions exactly opposed to each other. How was the difficulty to be got over? Put your faith in the doctors, they would

make things smooth.' And they did: They found a way out of the dilemma. Oh, that those villains were arraigned for their frauds! It is indeed high time. You see what it's come to already. People go crazy and blow their brains out; and all because of this. How could it be different?

" Brute beasts seem to be instinctively conscious that their offspring serves to continue the race and they keep a certain law in this regard. Man alone does not know this and doesn't wish to know it. He wrecks and destroys one-half of the human race; he changes all women, who ought to be active helpers of humanity towards truth and happiness, into foes of progress and growth. Look about you and say what or who it is that hinders the advance of humanity. Women. And why do they act like that? For the reason just given.

"Yes, yes," he several times repeated, beginning to stir about a little; and he took out a cigarette and began smoking, striving manifestly to calm his feelings.

XIV

" I LIVED my life like everyone else and, what was yet worse, I prided myself that since I did not commit adultery I was leading a chaste family life, was a genuinely moral man, perfectly blameless, and if quarrels did disturb the calm of our lives my wife was the cause; it was her character that was to blame. Needless to say the blame did not really lie with her. She was like other women, like most women. She had been reared in such a way as to enable her to play the part given to women in our society; which is the same as saying her training was in no respect different from that of other women of the well-to-do classes.

" It's the fashion nowadays to chatter about

some new scheme of female education; but it's all arrant nonsense. Women are actually trained and educated in absolute accord with the views really current in modern society about the mission of their sex; and female education will always be in close agreement with man's conception of woman. Now, nobody is ignorant what men's views of women are. Wine, women, and song—so sing the poets in verse. Read the poetry of every age and country, examine all the productions of painting and sculpture, beginning with love poems and Venuses and Phrynes, and you can't help seeing that both in the highest society and the lowest, woman is only an instrument of pleasure.

"And note the devil's cunning. It is not sufficient she should be thus degraded but the fact must be skilfully disguised. So in ages past we read of the gallant knights who

wandered about protesting they idolised woman, deified her. In our days men pretend they honour and revere woman, they give up their seats to her, pick up her handkerchief, whilst some go even so far as to allow her right to occupy all civil positions of trust, to have a share in the government, and so forth. But despite all such professions and protestations the world's view of woman's mission and position is unaltered; she is still what she was—an instrument of pleasure: and she knows quite well it is so.

"We observe exactly the same condition of things, the same contradiction between professions and deeds in regard to slavery. Slavery is the enjoyment by a few of the forced labour of the many, and before slavery can become a thing of the past, men must cease to wish for the enjoyment of the forced labour of others, must hold it to be

wrong or disgraceful. But no, they merely set about abolishing the external form of slavery, rendering it legally impossible to buy or sell a slave, and execute a deed of sale. This done, they work themselves into the conviction that slavery no longer exists, forgetting that it continues to be just as common as formerly, because people still consider it good and righteous to profit by the toil of others. As long as they hold it to be good and righteous there will never be any want of persons stronger or cunninger than their fellows who can transmute the opinion into a deed.

"It's just the same with the serfdom of woman. It consists in the fact that she is regarded and sought after as an object of pleasure, and that this standpoint is considered the right one. And then woman is solemnly enfranchised, is invested with extensive rights,

equal to those exercised by men; but men continue to consider her as an object of pleasure, continue to educate her accordingly, instilling those ideas into her mind first in her childhood and later by the agency of public opinion. So she stops what she was: a debased, demoralised serf, just as the man stops what he was: a demoralised slave-owner. We enfranchise woman in high schools and hospital wards, and still go on regarding her as before. Train her, as she is trained in Russia, to consider herself in that light and she will for ever stop a being of a lower kind. Gymnasiums and high schools are unable to change it. It can only be changed by a change in men's ideas of women and women's ideas of themselves. It can only be supplanted by a better condition of things when woman thinks the highest position she, as a woman, can reach is that of maidenhood, a

position she now regards as one of shame and disgrace. Till this alteration of views take place the ideal of every girl, whatever may be her education, will remain necessarily what it is now; to attract as many men as she can, so as to secure for herself the chance of selecting, and the circumstance that one girl knows more mathematics or another can play the harp does not matter one rap. A woman's happy and gets all she wishes when she captivates a man: hence the great aim of her life is to master the art of captivating men. So it has ever been and so it will be. In the life of a young girl in our rank the tendency is clearly noticeable and she takes it with her into the wedded state. To the maiden it is indispensable so that she may have a large selection; to the married woman, so that she may strengthen her dominance over her husband. The only incident that puts an end to the tendency or

at least represses it for a time, is the birth of children; and that even has no deterrent effect if the mother is a monster; that is to say, does not nurse her own children. But here again the physicians interfere.

"My wife, who suckled her five other children, fell ill soon after the birth of the first. The worthy physicians who cynically touched and inspected her, (for which I had to thank and pay them), ordained she should not suckle her child, and, as a result of this command, she was deprived of the only means by which she would have been effectually freed from coquettishness. We hired a wet-nurse; that is to say, we took advantage of the poverty, wretchedness and ignorance of another woman, allured her from her own child to ours and adorned her in return with a head-dress and tawdry laces. This however by the way. The point is that my wife's exemption

from a mother's cares and duties displayed itself in the arousing of that feminine coquettishness which had before lain dormant, whilst I began to be tormented by the agonies of jealousy, which had never given me a moment's peace during my married life but now became intolerably excruciating. The feeling of jealousy is no special characteristic of mine; it is the usual fate of all husbands who live with their wives as I lived with mine."

XV

"I NEVER once enjoyed a moment's relief from the maddening pangs of jealousy during the whole of my married life. There were times, however, when my tortures were uncommonly acute, and one of these periods commenced after the birth of my first child, when the doctors prohibited my wife from nursing it.

"There was a double reason for the intensity of my jealousy during the time in question. Firstly, the fact that my wife felt that uneasiness peculiar to mothers which causes a general disturbance in the natural tenor of life: and secondly, because, having observed with what a light heart she set aside the moral

obligations of a mbther, I naturally, if unconsciously, inferred she might with equal ease put away the duties of a wife, especially as she was enjoying splendid health and, in the face of the prohibition of the worthy physicians, suckled the children who were afterwards born without the least inconvenience to herself."

"You don't appear in love with physicians," I remarked, observing a markedly bitter tone of voice whenever he referred to them or their profession.

"It's not a matter of like or dislike," he rejoined. "My life has been utterly ruined by doctors and they have wrecked and are still wrecking the lives of thousands, of hundreds of thousands, and I cannot avoid noticing cause and effect. It is of course natural enough that, like lawyers and members of other professions, they should be rather anxious to earn money; and I must say I would most gladly

give them half my yearly income (and I'm sure everybody else would willingly follow my lead) if their influence for evil were shown up, on condition that they should abstain from interfering in other people's family matters, that they should keep to themselves and leave others in peace. Though I never gathered statistics on the subject, I know of scores of cases (and there are innumerable similar ones) in which they killed sometimes the unborn child, sometimes the mother, on the pretence of performing an operation. Yet no one ever troubles about such murders, just as no one ever added up the murders perpetrated by the Inquisition, because they are all done forsooth for the benefit of humanity. It would be impossible to estimate the number of crimes committed by the medical profession. And still they are all as dust in the balance compared with the moral debasement, the stain

of materialism, which they introduce into the world by means of women. If you listen to their advice (so numerous and perilous are the germs of disease that lie in wait for you with every step you take), whatever you do will tend not to draw you nearer your fellow-men but to separate you from them more than ever. If the doctor's orders were strictly carried out, every one of us ought to sit apart, entirely isolated from every one else, and ought never to think of leaving the syringe with carbolic acid out of his hand. Lately, I am told, they've found carbolic acid is useless. This, however, is quite by the way. The real poison of their influence lies in the demoralisation of people, particularly of women, that marks their path. It would nowadays be a solecism to say: 'You, my friend, are leading a wrong, irregular life. Live a better one.' Nobody would ever dream of addressing such words

to himself or others. If you're leading a wrong life, the cause is to be discovered in the nervous centres, in one of which something must have gone wrong, and you can't do better than put yourself in the hands of a doctor who will prescribe a shilling's worth of medicine, which you will take duly as ordered. You will then become worse, whereupon you must have more doctors and more medicines. A precious system!

"But all this by the way. I wished to state that my wife suckled the children herself with first-rate results, and this child-bearing and child-nursing were the only things tending to ease the agonies of jealousy I was enduring. Indeed, had it been otherwise, the catastrophe would have taken place much earlier. The children saved both her and me. During eight years she bore five children and suckled them all herself."

"Where are they now—your children, I mean?" I asked.

"The children?" he repeated, with a terrified look.

"Forgive me. Perhaps I've unknowingly awakened extremely painful memories."

"No, it's nothing. My sister-in-law and her brother took charge of the children. I gave them my fortune, but they refused to allow me the custody of my children. You see I'm a kind of insane individual. I'm now travelling away from them. I saw them, but they wouldn't give them up to me. If I had the care of them, I'd educate them so that they would not resemble their parents; and that is exactly what is not wanted. It is required they should be precisely the same as we were. Well, there's no help for it, I dare say. It's natural enough for them to keep the children away from me and disbelieve me. Moreover,

I'm not at all certain I've got the energy necessary to educate them; indeed, I'm disposed to think not: I'm but a ruin now, a cripple. One thing, however, I have: I know —yes, *this* is true, I know what most other people will not quickly learn. Yes, the children are all alive and growing up to be like the savages around them. I saw them: I saw them three times: I can do nothing for them: nothing. I'm now travelling to my place in the south where I possess a small house and garden. Yes, it'll take some time before people know what I know. It's easy to ascertain if there's a great deal of iron in the sun and what other metals there are in the sun and stars, but it's difficult, yes, fearfully difficult, to ascertain that which convicts us of immorality. You're listening and I am grateful even for that."

XVI

"You just now alluded to the children. There again, consider what falsehoods are circulated about children. Children are a blessing from God, children are a joy. Now, this is all a lie. It was once true, but ceased long ago to contain even a grain of truth. Children are a torture, and nothing more. Most mothers are distinctly aware of it and at times, when off their guard, they say so very plainly. Question the general average of mothers in our social sphere, people who live in affluence, and they'll tell you that through fear lest their children should sicken and die, they don't wish for any children at all, and if any are born, they refuse to suckle

them, for fear they might become too much attached to them and be rendered unhappy in consequence. The pleasures they get from contemplating the child, the charms of its little hands, its pretty little feet and its diminutive little body, are less than the torments they undergo through—I don't say the illness or loss of the child, but—the mere fear of the possibility of its illness or death. Having weighed the advantages and the disadvantages it results that the balance does not incline in favour of the former, and they accordingly resolve that it's not advisable to have children. Such feelings they express frankly, fearlessly, fancying they arise from love for children; an admirable, laudable feeling of which they are proud. They don't observe that by such reasoning, they are disavowing love and simply proclaiming their own selfishness. Their pleasure is diminished by fear

for the child and therefore they don't wish to have a child whom they would be fond of. They sacrifice, not themselves for a beloved creature, but the beloved creature who is about to come into life for themselves. It's tolerably evident this is not love but selfishness.

" On the other hand, you have not the heart to condemn these mothers of well-to-do families for their selfishness, when you bear in mind all they have to endure for the sake of their children's health, once more because of the doctors, who play so important a part in our lives. Even now, the mere recollection of what my wife endured, and the perpetual state of worry she was in during the first years of our married life, when we had three and four children who engrossed all her care, makes me shudder. We led a dog's life. It does not deserve to be called life. It was an eternal danger impending over us, followed

by momentary escapes from it, after which it would again impend menacingly till we escaped once more for a time, and so on *ad infinitum*, our condition being almost exactly like that of the crew of a sinking ship. There were times when I fancied all this was put on, and she was merely feigning to be nervous about the children so as to get the whip hand of me, so definitely did it help to settle all questions between us in her favour. It appeared as if everything she said and did was said and done as the outcome of a preconcerted scheme. This, however, was not really the case. She was perpetually worrying and torturing herself to death about the children, their health and their illnesses; and it was a martyrdom for her no less than for me. She felt that strong affection for children, that animal need of nursing, fondling, and nestling them which is usual to most

mothers. But she did not, like the animals, enjoy immunity from imagination and reasoning. The hen, for example, has no fear of what may be the future of her chick, has not the slightest idea what the diseases are to which it may fall a victim, knows nothing about the means by which people vainly fancy they can save themselves from sickness and death, and so her young are not a plague to her. She does for her chicks what it's in her nature to do, and what is therefore a pleasure for her to do, and it's but natural her young should be a delight to her. The moment one of her chicks becomes ill, her duties are very clear; she has simply to warm and feed it, and having done so feels she has performed all that's necessary. If it comes to pass, despite her care, that it dies, she doesn't ask why and whither it's gone: she clucks for a while, stops, and goes on living as before.

"With our unhappy women, and with my wife in particular, the case is altogether different. Apart from the questions of children's diseases and the way to treat them, there were numbers of other subjects always turning up, such as, for instance, how to educate them, how to train their minds, about which she had heard and read an endless number of ever-varying rules and advice. They ought to be fed thus and only with that and that; no, not so; not with that, but thus, and with such and such a food. On the questions of clothing them, bathing them, putting them to sleep, getting them to walk, regulating the quality of the air they breathe, both of us found out (but particularly she) new regulations every week. It was exactly as if children had only begun to be born yesterday. It was all because the unfortunate child wasn't fed properly or didn't have its bath in proper time,

that it fell ill; therefore she felt it was she who ought to bear the blame for not having taken the necessary precautions, for not having done what ought to have been done.

" So in the most favourable conditions, that is, when in perfect health, children are a torture, but when they become ill, life is really not worth living, it's simply a hell on earth. We begin with the postulate that diseases can be cured, that there is a science which has their treatment for its aim, and that there are persons called doctors who know how to cure them. Not, of course, that every doctor is able to treat them successfully, but the best in the profession are. And now, the child being ill, the problem to be solved is how to obtain the very first-rate doctor, the man who saves; that done, the child's saved. If you can't consult him, if you're living in a different part of the city from where he lives, and can't

get him in time, the child's lost. And mark you, it's not the belief of my wife alone which I'm now expressing, it's the belief of all the women of her social rank. Bits of gossip like the following came often to her ears: 'Mrs A's three children, poor dear things, died because Dr Z——. wasn't sent for in time. He saved Mrs D's eldest little girl, you know. The Petroffs, by the advice of the doctor, isolated themselves in time and went to live at different hotels and saved their lives by doing so. The others who didn't isolate themselves lost their children. Mrs So-and-So's little girl was very weak till by doctor's advice they went to live in the south, and saved the child's life.' What could she do but fret and worry and tremble from year's end to year's end, at the idea that the lives of her children, to whom she was attached by ties of strong animal affection, depended entirely on

her ascertaining in good time what Doctor Ivan Zakharievitch had to say on the subject? And still nobody knew what Ivan Zakharievitch would say, he himself less than anyone, because he was and is well aware that he knows nothing and has no help to give, and so all he does is to shuffle and trim as well as he can, so that people may not stop believing he knows what he's talking about.

"If she had been an absolute animal, she wouldn't have tormented herself as she did. If she had been an absolute human creature, she would have been inspired by faith in God and would have spoken and thought like the peasant women, who sigh: 'God gave and God has taken away, you can't escape from God.' She would have known that the life and death of all mankind and of her children among others were beyond

the control of man, in God's hands alone; and she would not have racked her brain with the idea that it was in her capacity to prevent the sickness and death of her children. But she failed to do so. As a fact, her position was extremely complex. She had charge of the most fragile creatures imaginable, weak little things liable to countless mishaps. She was attracted to them by strong animal affection. Besides, these beings were entrusted to her care and nevertheless the means of preserving them scathless were hidden from her and revealed to men who were complete strangers to her, whose services and advice she could not get otherwise than by paying considerable sums of money; and even then not always. How could she do otherwise than torment herself?

" This she did without ceasing. Just when our wrathful feelings would be slowly dying

down after some scene of jealousy or an ordinary quarrel and we preparing to order our lives afresh, to begin a course of reading or undertake some enterprise, a message would come suddenly that Vasa was sick, that Mary had a stomach complaint, that a rash had broken out on André's face or body, and then our martyrdom began afresh. To what part of the city should we rush, for which doctor should we send, in what room should we isolate the sick child? And then would begin the endless series of injections, measurings of temperature, prescriptions, potions, and physicians. And before this terminated, something else would crop up unexpectedly, and so forth, a regular family life being totally out of the question. As I stated before, it was one everlasting escape from fancied and from actual dangers. The same thing still goes on in most families. In ours it was pain-

fully obvious. My wife loved her children passionately and was credulous, so that the presence of children, far from helping to better our lives, only envenomed matters.

"Again the children were a fresh pretext for bickerings. Each of us particularly favoured one child, who was our favourite instrument in the quarrel. For instance, I generally made use of Vasa, the eldest: she of Liza. Later on, as they grew up and their characters developed, they gradually became our allies, whom we tried to enlist on our sides by every means at our disposal. It told dreadfully on their bringing-up, poor things, but during our everlasting warfare we had no time or wish to give it a thought. The eldest boy was generally my partisan; the girl, who resembled her mother and often took up arms for her was not seldom odious to me."

XVII

"In this style we went on, our relations becoming by degrees more and more hostile, till at length it was no longer difference of opinions that produced hostility, but settled hostility that produced difference of opinions. No matter what opinion she might express, no matter what wish, I always disagreed beforehand, and she treated me in the same way. In the fourth year of our marriage we tacitly reached the conclusion that there was no expectation of our ever being able to understand one another, to agree with one another, and so we ceased making any further efforts to come to harmony. Each of us held his or her own opinion on the most everyday

subjects; about everything connected with the children, for example. The views I advocated were not at all so vital to me that I could not sacrifice them, but she was of the opposite way of thinking, and to surrender my opinion would mean to yield to her. Now, whatever else I might agree to, that I couldn't dream of doing. It was the same with her. She considered herself as having acted rightly and properly by me, and I was always spotless in my own eyes. When together, we were reduced to something like silence, to such talk as the animals themselves, I'm sure, can carry on among themselves. 'What time is it?' 'Is it time to go to bed?' 'What shall we have for dinner to-day?' 'Where shall we drive?' 'What's in the papers?' 'Shall I send for the doctor? Mary has a sore throat.'

"A single step beyond the limits of this

narrow circle of conversational subjects was sufficient to cause the renewal of hostilities. Skirmishes and phrases of hatred were produced by the coffee, the table-cloth, the carriage, the card played at whist; in a word, by things and events which couldn't possibly be of the least importance. Speaking for myself, I may say I was boiling over with hatred for her. I would watch her pouring out the tea, waving her foot to and fro, raising the spoon to her mouth, smacking her lips and drawing in the liquid, and I loathed her for it all as though she had committed a really bad deed. I didn't notice at the time that those periods of hatred returned regularly, uniformly, and always corresponded with the periods of what we called love.

"The periods and the degrees corresponded. After a period of love came a period of hatred. A period of violent love was

followed by a long period of hatred; a shorter period of hatred followed a milder display of love. We were not then aware that such love and hate were the two opposite poles of one and the same feeling.

"It would have been awful to live thus, if we had realised and understood our position, but we did not understand it. And there lies the salvation, as well as the punishment, of men who lead irregular lives: they can always raise a cloud before their eyes which conceals the wretchedness of their situation from them. It was in that way we acted. She tried to forget the terrible reality by bestowing her attention on absorbing and always urgent occupations, such as household matters, the furniture, her dresses and those of the children, their schooling and their health. As for me, I had my own methods of intoxicating myself. There was the intoxication of my daily work,

the intoxication of sport, the intoxication of cards. So both of us were always occupied, and both of us felt the more continually we were occupied, the more bitter and malignant we could be to one another.

"'It's all right for you to go on making your grimaces,' I would say of her to myself; 'but you bothered me to death all last night with the scenes you made; and now I've got to go to the meeting of the committee.' 'You have no reason to feel anxious,' she on her side would not only think, but say aloud to me, 'but I haven't slept a wink all night with the child.'

"All the new-fangled theories about hypnotism, physical disorders, hysterics and the rest, are an absurdity, not a simple absurdity, however, but a wicked, mischievous absurdity. There is not the slightest doubt Charcot would have pronounced my wife hysterical and my-

self abnormal, and it's probable enough he would have started treating us. And still there was nothing whatever to cure.

"And so we lived in a continual fog, unable to see and realise our position. And if the incident that happened later on had not happened at all, I might have lived to be an old man without once ceasing to believe I had led a good life, not remarkably good, but not a bad life. I might never have caught a glimpse of the gulf of misery and hateful falsehood in which I was hopelessly floundering. We were two prisoners hating one another and chained together. We envenomed each other's lives and tried to close our eyes to what we were doing. I didn't know then that 99 per cent. of all married couples are plunged in a hell just like mine. I didn't know then I was in such a hell, and therefore never thought others were.

"It's wonderful what remarkable coincidences may be discovered in the course of a regular, commonplace life, and even in an altogether irregular life. For instance, just when the parents have made each other's life intolerable, it becomes necessary, in the interests of their children's education, to live in a town where the conditions for education are favourable." He kept silent for a while. He then uttered his strange sounds, which now resembled suppressed sobs. We were approaching a station.

"What time is it?" he asked me. I looked at my watch; it was 2 a.m.

"Are you not tired?" he exclaimed.

"No, I'm not; but you must be fatigued," I replied.

"I'm choking," he said. "Excuse me, I'll get out at the station for a time and get a drink of water," and staggering down the

passage in the centre of the carriage he left the train. I remained seated alone in the compartment turning over in my mind all he had been saying, and so absorbed was I by my thoughts that I did not observe his return by the opposite door.

XVIII

"I KNOW I'm continually diverging from the subject, but the truth is I've pondered long and carefully over the whole matter, and I've come to look at many things from a new angle of sight, and I would prefer to explain all this to you in detail.

"As I was saying, we left the country and went to settle in town. In a town unhappy persons breathe far more freely than in the country. A man may live a hundred years in a town without the fact ever once dawning on him that he has been dead and putrid ever so long. He has no time to examine into himself, he's always busy, there are social rounds and duties, the arts, his own and his

children's health to see to, their education to direct. He has to receive the visits of these persons and those, has in turn to visit acquaintances and friends, has to see this person and hear that one. A town is never without one or more celebrities, of whose presence it is your strict duty to avail yourself. Now you must have yourself treated for this or that complaint, or have your children prescribed for. Then again you have to see the teacher, the tutor, the governess; and your life is a hollow sham.

"We lived on in this manner growing less sensitive to the suffering produced by our daily intercourse. Besides, we had at first the pleasing pastime of settling down in the town, installing ourselves in our new lodgings, and the consequent travelling to and fro between town and country.

"The second winter after our arrival an

episode took place without which none of the after events of my life would ever have happened. She was delicate in health and the rascally doctors forbade her to become again a mother. And they taught her the method of fulfilling their orders. This was an abomination to me and I opposed it, but she insisted on obeying the physicians, refusing obstinately to give way to my representations. Children are needful to the peasant, though he finds it difficult enough to support them, but they're needful and that is the justification of his conjugal relations. To us who already have children, they're not a necessity. On the contrary, they're a cause of fresh worry, of expense; in a word, they're a burden. We are therefore without any justification for the life we lead. We either escape from having children by artificial means, or else—still worse—we regard them

as a misfortune, the outcome of carelessness on our part. But we have absolutely no justification. So low have we fallen, however, from a moral standpoint, that we don't feel the want of any. The enormous majority of the present educated classes surrender themselves to this species of life without the faintest twinge of conscience. Nor would it be easy to expect remorse, as there's no such things as conscience in our lives, unless we agree to bestow the name on the conscience of public opinion, of the criminal law. And in the present instance neither of the two is shocked or in any manner brought into play. There is no reason why you should be ashamed to face society, because all its members do likewise, Mrs P. and Ivan Zakharievitch and the rest. Neither need you be afraid of the criminal law. It's only ugly country wenches and soldier's wives who

cast their children into wells and ponds; and of course it's only right that such abominable characters as they should be sent to prison. We arrange all such things decently, respectably.

"Two more years went by and it grew evident that the means provided by the doctors were beginning to act. My wife's appearance improved; she became more attractive than ever, with the last mellow beauty, so to speak, of summer. She felt it, and thought much about herself. Her beauty was of a provoking, disturbing kind, such as would naturally characterise a pretty woman of thirty, who was well-fed, irritable, and no longer wearied by the cares and responsibilities of motherhood. Wherever she went she was certain to attract men's eyes, to magnetise them, as it were. She was like a well-fed, capricious, harnessed horse which

has long stood idle in the stables and from which the bridle has been suddenly removed. There was no curb of any sort just as there is no curb of any sort to control 99 per cent. of our women. I felt it and was seized with terror."

XIX

He got up suddenly and went nearer the window.

"Forgive me," he remarked, and silently staring at the window remained three or four minutes in that attitude. Then, heaving a deep sigh, he again got up and sat down opposite me.

His face underwent a complete change. There was a piteous expression in his eyes and a strange kind of smile played about his lips.

"I'm a bit tired. But I'll proceed with my story. There's yet plenty of time, it hasn't dawned yet."

"Yes," he began, after lighting a cigarette, "she throve and became fatter from the

time when she stopped having children, and her malady—the eternal bother and anxiety about the children—began to vanish. It appeared as if she were recovering.

"Yes, she appeared to have recovered her senses as after a drinking bout, to have awakened to the circumstance that there was a whole God's world full of joys and happiness which she had forgotten somehow, in which she had not known how to live. 'I must try not to let this slip away from me; time will rush past very rapidly, and it will be too late.' This at least is what I imagined she thought or rather felt. And I don't see how she could have thought or felt otherwise, considering that all her education had had the sole object of convincing her there's only one thing worthy of attention in the world; so-called 'love.' She had married and experienced something of that 'love,' but not at all as much as she had

hoped for, not what she had promised herself and longed for. She had, moreover, encountered many disappointments, disillusions, sufferings in marriage, among them that torture of which she had never even dreamed—children. That kind of suffering had tired and harassed her until the complaisant doctors came and informed her how to avoid the duties of motherhood. So she rejoiced, tried the doctor's method and revived, living and breathing for one only purpose, 'love.'

"But love with a husband whom jealousy and hate made hateful was not what she longed for and she began dreaming of another love, chaste and new—at any rate I thought so—looking around her in vague expectation, as it were, of something. I perceived this and could not help feeling uneasy in consequence, especially as about this time she lost no opportunity of expressing such ideas

in conversation with others, intending them, of course, for my own ear; and this in spite of the fact that only an hour before she might have said precisely the opposite. For example she would often declare, half seriously, half in jest, that maternal anxiety is a delusion, that it's a pity to sacrifice one's youth for one's children instead of taking one's share of the pleasures of living. At that time she cared less for her children and more for herself, caring about her personal appearance —though she tried to hide it—about her pleasures, and even trying to perfect herself in certain accomplishments. For instance she began again to practise music—she had once played the piano with some technical skill and delicacy—and this was the visible commencement of the catastrophe."

He again turned to the window and looked out with weary eyes, but making an ob-

vious effort to command himself, he went on.

"Yes, it was then that person appeared on the scene."

He faltered, and twice uttered the strange sound which characterised him. I could see it was excessively painful to him to name the man, to mention or refer to him in any way. But he made an attempt, and having, so to speak, broken down the barrier which kept him back, he went on with determination:

"He was a vile fellow in my opinion. I say this, not because of the important part he played in my life, but because it's actually so. But the fact that he was a wretched fellow only shows what an irresponsible being she was. If it hadn't been this man, it would have been another. It was fated this should come to pass."

He was again silent for a while.

"He was a musician, a violinist, half-professional, half-fashionable amateur. His father, a landowner, had been my father's neighbour and ruined himself financially many years ago. He had three children, all boys, who were provided for in one way or another, the youngest being sent to his godmother in Paris where he studied in the Academy of Music, as he had a gift for music; and he came out as a violinist and took part in public concerts. He was a man who——"

On the point of saying something venomous Pozdnisheff made an obvious effort to control himself and, speaking very quickly, continued:

"I don't know how he lived at that time; I only know that he returned that year to Russia and called on me. He had almond-shaped, moist eyes, red, smiling lips, waxed moustaches; his hair was cut and trimmed in

the latest fashion, his face was of that insipidly pleasing kind which women call 'not bad-looking,' he was of slender build, but not misshapen. He was disposed to strike a note of familiarity to the full extent which circumstances appeared to justify; but he was at the same time especially sensitive and ever prepared to stop short if he encountered the least check or discouragement, but not without due regard to his own outward dignity. His boots, of the approved Parisian shade, were of the buttoned order, his tie always of some loud colour; in fact, he had adopted all the little peculiarities which draw the attention of foreigners in Paris and by their originality and novelty catch a woman's eye and prepossess her in the wearer's favour. Outwardly he was always good-humoured. He had a way of speaking about everything in allusions and fragmentary phrases, just as if

you knew all about it and vividly remembered it and could finish his words for him. This was the man who, with his music, was the cause of all that ensued.

"At my trial all the facts of the case were fitted together in such a way as to make it appear as if I had killed my wife through jealousy. This was not so—at least, I mean it needs to be considerably modified before it can be said to be true. No doubt was entertained in court that my wife had wronged me and I had killed her to avenge my outraged honour (that's what they call it), and I was therefore acquitted. I endeavoured at my trial to put the facts in their true light, but my endeavours were interpreted as the outcome of a desire on my part to rehabilitate my wife's good name. But indeed her relations with the musician, whatever they may have been, mattered very little really to me or to her.

What mattered very much is what I have already told you. It was all due to the circumstance that there was that yawning, bottomless precipice between her and me through the frightful strain of mutual hatred by which the slightest contact was quite enough to bring on a crisis. Quarrels also had become very common between us at that time and were unusually savage, alternating, as before, with outbursts of violent animal desires. If he had not come on the scene somebody else would have played his part quite as well. If one pretext of jealousy had not been present another would have been invented. What I mean to assert is that all husbands who live as I lived must give themselves up to self-indulgence sooner or later or separate from their wives, or else they must kill themselves or their wives as I killed mine. If there are persons to whom none of these alternatives

has been a necessity, they are very rare exceptions. Before I ended as I did, I was several times about to commit suicide and my wife more than once tried to poison herself."

XX

"SOMETHING of the sort had occurred a short time before the catastrophe. We'd been living for a brief space, during a cessation of hostilities, in a sort of informal truce, and in the absence of reasons for breaking it we began talking about a certain dog at the exhibition which, I said, had won a medal. 'Not a medal,' she replied, 'but an honourable mention.' And then the dispute began, during which we went from one subject to another, reproaching each other at every step: 'Ah, yes, I knew that long ago; it's always like that with you.' 'You said so yourself.' 'No, I said nothing of the sort.' 'I'm a liar, then, I suppose,' and so forth; and you feel that a

minute more and a dreadful struggle will commence, in which you would like to kill yourself or your antagonist. You know it'll start presently and you're in dread of it and would like to restrain yourself, but hatred seizes on your whole being. Her condition was, if possible, still worse than mine; she deliberately put a wrong construction on everything I said; and every word she spoke was steeped in venom; and she took care to hurt my tender places and reopen old sores, with every one of which she was quite familiar. As the dispute went on, matters grew worse. 'Silence!' I thundered at length, or some exclamation to that effect. She dashed out of the room towards the nursery, I following and trying to stop her so that she may hear me out. As I seize her by the sleeve she pretends I've hurt her and screams, 'Children, your father's beating me!' At which I roar out, 'Don't

lie!' 'She answers in the same high pitch, 'This isn't the first time you've done it.' The children run up to her and she quiets them, while I go on, 'Don't make-believe.' 'It's all make-believe in your opinion. You're quite capable of murdering anybody and then saying she only feigns to be dead. Oh, I've found you out by this time. That's what you're longing for.'

"'I wish you were dead as a dog!' I shout out in retort. I remember how amazed and horrified I was when I uttered those dreadfully coarse words and I can't explain how they could have passed my lips. As soon as I'd spoken them I rushed out of the room into my study, sat down and began to smoke. From there I could hear her in the ante-room preparing to go out. I called out, 'Where are you going?' But she made no answer. 'The, devil take her!' I say to myself, as,

going back to my study, I lie down again and smoke. A thousand different schemes of revenge thronged my brain, and ingenious combinations by which I was to make everything good again and repair what had been said and done. I reflect on it, smoking hard. It occurs to me to run away from her, to hide myself, to emigrate to America. I positively go so far as to consider how I can best get rid of her altogether, and please my imagination with the idea that after that has been over everything will be again as it should be, I shall tie myself to another beautiful woman, fresh and pure. And the method of getting rid of her will be her natural death or else I'll apply for a divorce. And then I discuss with myself the best way of bringing it about. Then I become aware that I'm wandering from the point at issue, that my thoughts are not what they should be, and in order

to obscure my clear consciousness of it I smoke.

"Things at home were meanwhile taking their usual course. The governess arrives and asks, 'Where is madame? When will she return?' The footman asks, 'Shall I serve tea?' I go to the dining-room. The children are there, and they look at me interrogatively, reproachfully, particularly Liza, who's already beginning to understand the significance of these occurrences. We drink tea in silence, *she's* not come back yet. The whole evening passes and still she's not returned. Two opposite feelings meanwhile take alternate possession of my soul: anger because she's torturing the children and me by her absence, the upshot of which will be that she'll come back at last, and fear that she'll never return, that she'll lay violent hands on herself. I would go and fetch her; but

where is she? At her sister's? It would look absurd for me to go there and make inquiries; and besides I don't care; if she wants to hurt me, let her hurt herself too. If I were to bother myself and run here and there to look for her I should merely be playing into her hands, because that's just the aim she had in mind, when she left the house, and so she'd be encouraged to do worse next time. But what if she is not at her sister's? what if she has somehow made away with herself? Eleven has struck. Twelve. I don't go into the bedroom. It would be stupid of me to lie down there by myself and wait. But even here in the study I don't lie down. I want to do some kind of work that'll occupy me—to write letters or to read, for instance; but I find I'm incapable of doing anything, and so I watch and wait by myself in the study, torturing myself, wild with rage, listening to every

sound real and imaginary. It's already three. It's struck four and she's not yet come. Towards morning I fell asleep. When I awoke she had not come back. Everything in the household meanwhile went on as before; only everybody had a puzzled, dissatisfied look, and they all stared at me interrogatively and reproachfully, as if they felt it had all been caused by me. And all this when my soul was the arena in which the same struggle for mastery went on as before, between anger at her having left me and dread that something had happened to her. At eleven her sister drove up as her envoy and the old procedure was resumed again as if it were new. 'She's in a fearful state. What's it all about?' 'Nothing's happened.' I emphasise her impossible character and assert I did nothing to her. 'Yes, but things can't remain as they are now, at any rate,

observes her sister. 'That's her affair, not mine,' I answer. 'I will not make the first advances. If we're to separate, then let's separate.' And so her sister went back without having accomplished anything. I had boldly said I wouldn't move first in the matter, but as soon as she had gone and I went out and beheld the sad, frightened faces of the children, I was quite ready to take the first step. I began walking to and fro as before and smoking. I drank vodka and wine at lunch and thereby attained the object I had in view, which was to disguise from myself the absurdity of my position.

"About three o'clock she drove up herself. As she made no remark when she saw me, I concluded she had decided to make peace and I told her it was she who had irritated me with reproaches and so started the quarrel. She turned to me with a hard, unconciliatory

expression on her face, which bore marks of profound suffering, and intimated that she had come not to ask for terms but to take away the children, as it was impossible for us to live any more together. On this I began to point out I wasn't to blame, that it was she who had exasperated me to fury by her bitter reproaches. She again fixed a hard, triumphant gaze on me, and cried, 'Say no more, you've repented.' To which I replied I detested comedies. She then screamed out something I did not catch and rushed off to her room and turned the key in the lock. I pushed at the door several times, but got no answer. I went off enraged. Half an hour later Liza ran to me in tears: 'What has happened? I can't hear mamma.' We go together to her room, I push at the door, and, the bolt being badly shot, both of the folding-doors open at once and I go up to the bed. She's lying in

an awkward position, dressed in petticoats and high boots. On the table by the bed-side there's an empty bottle which has had opium in it. We bring her to, and tears follow closely on the first signs of returning consciousness and it all ends in a reconciliation. In our hearts, however, we cherish the same hate for each other, to which is added the feeling of exasperation produced by the pain and suffering accompanying the quarrel, which either of us puts down to the account of the other. But it was indispensable to end it one way or another and life moves on again in its old groove.

"And quarrels like these, and yet worse, were perpetually occurring, now once a week, now once a month, now every day. And it was always the same old tale, without variations or modifications. Things went once so far that I applied for a foreign

passport. The dispute lasted two days, but even that ended in a half-hearted explanation and reconciliation and I didn't go abroad."

XXI

"THAT was the kind of life we led, those were the relations in which we stood to one another when that man—Trukhatchevsky was his name—made his appearance. He came to Moscow and visited me one morning. I told the servant to show him in. He and I had formerly been on terms of intimacy. He now felt his way cautiously before venturing to deal with me on the old footing, and he used expressions and spoke in a tone equally far removed from distant formality and the intimacy of comrades. I quickly settled his doubts by treating him as a simple acquaintance and he took his cue readily, without a moment's hesitation or awkwardness.

"I disliked him extremely from the first moment I beheld him. But a curious fatal force moved me not merely to refrain from repelling him, but to draw him nearer to me. What could be simpler than to exchange a few words with him, to bid him coldly good-bye and not to introduce him to my wife? But no, I must talk about his playing and tell him I'd heard he'd given up music. He said it wasn't so, he had never practised more in his life than at that moment, and, passing from himself to me, reminded me I had also played in times past. To this I replied I didn't play now, but my wife was a good musician. It's very strange. From the very first day, from the very first hour I saw him, my relations with him were such as they could only have been after everything that happened later. There was something extremely strained in my intercourse with him. I took note of every word,

every phrase used by him or myself and lent them a significance justified by nothing I then knew. I introduced him to my wife, and the talk immediately turned to music, and he offered his services to accompany her on the violin. That morning, as during the whole of the later period, my wife looked wonderfully elegant, attractive, and provokingly beautiful. It was clear he pleased her from the very first. Besides, she was also rejoiced at the prospect of being accompanied by him on the violin—a pleasure she relished so much that she'd hired a musician from one of the theatres to accompany her. This gratification was reflected in her looks; but as soon as her eyes met mine, she guessed my feelings and the expression of her face changed at once; and then the game of deception began. I smiled graciously and looked as though charmed.

"He, eyeing my wife as all immoral men

gaze at pretty women, feigned to be exclusively interested in the theme under discussion,—that is to say, in the very thing that was utterly empty of interest in his opinion. She tried to appear indifferent, but was rather disconcerted by the false smile on my face which denoted the jealous man and was quite familiar to her, and by his gaze. I saw her eyes gleaming with a curious brightness from the moment she first beheld him, and owing, maybe, to my jealousy an electric current appeared to bind them and establish uniformity in their looks and smiles, so that when she blushed he blushed, and when she smiled he also smiled. We talked a little about music, Paris and various trivial commonplaces, and then he got up to go, and smiling, with his hat pressed against his thigh, stood looking now at her, then at me, as if waiting for what we should do.

"I distinctly recall that moment, because

during those brief seconds it lay in my power not to invite him to the house; and then the catastrophe would never have happened. But I glanced at him and her: 'Don't for a moment delude yourself with the idea that I'm jealous of you,' I mentally assured her, 'or that I have any fear of you,' I mentally assured him. And thereupon I begged him to visit us in the evening and bring his violin with him, to accompany my wife. She stared at me in amazement, blushed, was fluttered and frightened, so to speak, began to decline the offer, declaring she couldn't play sufficiently well for that. This refusal of hers only provoked me and I insisted the more strongly. I remember well the strange feeling with which I looked at the back of his head and his white neck, set off by the black hair which was carefully combed back on both sides of his head, as with a brisk, dancing

movement, suggestive of a bird hopping, he walked out. I could not hide from myself that the man's presence was a torture: it's in my power, I said to myself, to act in such a manner that we'll never any more be bothered by his visits. But thus to act is to admit I'm afraid of him. And I haven't the least fear of him: that would be too degrading, I said to myself. And in the ante-room, as he was preparing to go, I insisted, knowing my wife would hear everything I was saying, on his coming again in the evening, bringing his violin with him. This he promised to do and went away.

"He came in the evening and they played together, but for a long time their playing was out of accord. They hadn't got the music my wife wanted and she was unable without preparation to play the music they had. I was very fond of music myself and I rather liked

the idea of their playing together; and I arranged the music-stand and turned over the leaves for him. They contrived at last to perform a few pieces: some songs without words and a sonata by Mozart. He played splendidly: he had in the highest degree what is called "ton," besides which he was endowed with a delicate, refined taste that seemed quite out of harmony with his character. He played of course far better than my wife, and helped her, respectfully praising her playing at the same time. She appeared interested only in the music and behaved simply and naturally. As for me, though I pretended to be interested in the music, I was enduring indescribable torments through jealousy, the whole evening.

"What considerably increased the anguish I experienced was the knowledge that the sole feeling she had for me was one of chronic

irritation, only interrupted occasionally for a short time, as before, whilst, on the other hand, he was qualified by his elegant appearance, the circumstance that he was a new-comer, and, above all, on account of his unquestionable musical talent, to produce a deep impression on her. Owing to all this and also the fact that they must necessarily be often thrown into each other's society by playing together, and thanks to the effect of music, especially that of the violin, on sensitive natures, this man was bound not merely to take her fancy, but to conquer her completely. I couldn't help noticing it all and suffered dreadfully in consequence. And yet, in spite of this, or rather, perchance, by reason of it, an invisible power forced me against my will to be not only extremely polite, but even affectionate towards him. I am not able to specify the motive which prompted me

to act like that, whether it was to prove to my wife and him I wasn't influenced by fear or to delude myself, I can't say. I only know that my relations with him from the very first were not natural and simple.

"In order not to yield to the desire to kill him on the spot I felt obliged to treat him cordially. I gave him supper with expensive wines, went into ecstacies over his musical talents, addressed him with a specially affectionate smile and invited him to dinner the following Sunday and to accompany my wife in the evening. I told him I'd ask some musical friends of mine to come and hear him. And so that day ended."

Here Pozdnisheff was overwhelmed with emotion, and, changing his position, again uttered his strange noise.

"It's wonderful how I was affected by that man's presence," he went on, manifestly

making a vigorous effort to compose himself. "I was returning from the Exhibition three or four days later and, on entering the house, I suddenly felt oppressed at heart, as if a heavy stone were weighing me down. At first I could think of nothing to account for the feeling. Then I remembered it was caused by my having descried something as I was passing through the ante-room which reminded me of *him*. It was only when I was in my study that I was aware of what that something was and I returned forthwith to verify the discovery. Yes, I was not mistaken, it was his overcoat: you know, a fashionable overcoat. I was excessively sensitive to anything relating to him in any way, noticing it immediately, even though I was not always distinctly conscious of it. I then asked the servant. Yes, he was there. I went to my room, not through the parlour but through the

children's class-room. 'My daughter Liza was reading a book and the nurse at the table with the youngest child was spinning the cover of some vessel. The door leading into the drawing-room was open and I could hear the measured arpeggio and the sound of her voice and his. I listened but couldn't distinguish any words. It was obvious the notes of the piano were sounding merely for the purpose of drowning their conversation—their kisses, perhaps. Good God! what a wild beast was awakened in me! What horrible imaginings seized my brain! I am even now struck with horror at the simple remembrance of the fury that then mastered my soul.

"My heart contracted, stopped and then suddenly thumped against my breast like a sledge-hammer. The predominating feeling in this, as in all fury and hatred, was pity for myself. 'Before the children, before the

nurse,' I thought to myself. There must have been something awful in my face, because Liza stared at me with terror reflected in her eyes. 'What am I to do?' I asked myself. 'Go in? I can't. God only knows what I shall do if I go in. And still I can't go away!' The nurse looked at me as if she understood my position.

"'I can't help going in,' I said to myself and quickly threw the door open. He was sitting at the piano, practising the arpeggio with his large white fingers turned upwards: she stood at a corner of the piano, some music spread out before her. She was the first to see or hear me and turned towards me. Was she terrified and her outward composure only simulated, or was she really composed? I can't say. But it is certain she didn't start or move in any way when I came in, she merely blushed; and even that was not till afterwards.

"'I'm so glad you have come, we haven't yet decided what to play next Sunday,' she said, in a tone of voice she would never have used if we had been alone. This and the 'we,' alluding to him and herself, enraged me. I greeted him in silence, he shook me by the hand, and went on straightway to explain, with a smile I thought derisive, that he had brought some music in order to prepare for Sunday, but they were not agreed what to play; whether it was to be something difficult and classical, for instance, one of Beethoven's Sonatas, with the violin, or light, trifling pieces? It was so simple and natural that I couldn't find anything to carp at, and simultaneously I saw and was convinced it was wholly untrue and they had been planning methods of playing me false.

"There can be nothing more agonising for jealous persons (and in our society all men are jealous) than some of the conditions of

fashionable life which make the closest and most perilous contact between man and woman permissible. It's impossible, without making oneself the laughing-stock of the world, to prevent the proximity between men and women dancing at balls, between doctors and their women patients, between artists, painters, and musicians working together.

"Two persons are cultivating the noblest of arts—music—together; this needs a certain proximity in which there is nothing indecent, and nobody except a silly, jealous husband could find anything blameworthy in it. And yet every one knows perfectly well that it's owing to these very occupations, especially musical studies, engaged in together, that by far the greatest amount of wickedness happens in our society.

"It was obvious I disconcerted the pair by my own embarrassment. For a long time I

could say nothing, I was like a bottle turned upside down, from which the liquid can't escape because of the bottle being too full. I wanted to load them with reproaches, to drive him out of the house, but I felt, on the other hand, that I ought to seem amiable and affectionate to him. And I appeared so. I pretended to approve of everything, obeying the impulse that obliged me to increase my outward civility and cordiality in proportion as the mental sufferings produced by his presence grew acuter. I said I felt perfect confidence in his taste and advised her to follow my example. He remained just as long as was absolutely needful to remove the unpleasant impression I had caused by walking suddenly into the room with a frightened face and continuing to keep an awkward silence after I'd entered. He then left, pretending they had then determined what pieces they would play on the

morrow. I was persuaded the question of the musical programme was entirely indifferent to them. I escorted him with significant obsequiousness to the ante-room (how could I treat less politely the man who had come to disturb the peace and destroy the happiness of my family?), and I pressed his soft white hand with unusual warmth."

XXII

"I DIDN'T speak to my wife the whole of that day. I couldn't. Proximity to her caused such a striving of hate in me that I was afraid of myself. She asked me at dinner in the presence of the children when I intended to go to the country (I was obliged to go to the country the next week to attend the district sittings of the zemstvo). I mentioned the date. She inquired whether I needed anything for the journey. I said no, and sat on in silence till the end of the dinner, and in silence got up from the table and went to the study. Of late she never used to come to my room, especially at that time of day. I had lain down and was yielding to angry

thoughts when the ghastly, absurd idea suddenly entered my head that she was coming to conceal her sin, like Uriah's wife, and that was why she was about to visit me at that unaccustomed hour. 'Can it be she's really coming to visit me?' I asked myself, as I heard her footsteps approaching nearer and nearer. 'If so, it's manifest I was right; she——' And I felt an ineffable hatred for her. Nearer and still nearer. Is it possible she will not pass by and go into the drawing-room? No. The door creaked suddenly on its hinges and there on the threshold stood her tall, well-proportioned, handsome figure, her face and eyes expressing timidity, a desire to ingratiate herself with me, a desire she attempted to hide, but did not escape my notice, and the meaning of which I knew well. I held my breath so long that I was almost suffocated, and continuing to stare at her,

I took up the cigarette-case and began smoking.

"'Now how can you? A person comes to sit down and have a quiet talk, and there you take out your cigarettes and smoke!' and she sat down on the sofa beside me, leaning softly against me. I moved a little further off, so as not to touch her. 'I see you're annoyed that I am going to play on Sunday,' she said. 'I'm not annoyed in the least,' I rejoined. 'D'you think I don't see it?' 'I can only congratulate you if you do. The only thing I notice is that you behave like a cocotte——' 'Oh, if you're going to abuse me in such language, I'll go.' 'Go, but mark this; if the honour of the family is not dear to you, it's not you who are dear to me (the devil take you!), but the honour of the family is.' 'What! what do you mean?' 'Leave the room! Leave the room, for God's sake!'

I don't know whether she only made believe she didn't understand me or really didn't but she took offence. She rose, but didn't go, and continued standing in the middle of the room: 'You're making yourself absolutely intolerable. You have a character that makes it impossible even for an angel to live with you,' and intent as usual upon hurting me in the most sensitive spot, she reminded me how I had once treated my sister. I had once lost my temper and spoken very roughly to my sister and the memory of it was always very painful to me. Hence she selected that sore spot to stab me. 'If you treat your own sister in that manner, nothing you could do would surprise me,' she wound up. 'Yes, she isn't satisfied with offending, humbling, disgracing me, but she must make it seem that I'm to blame for it all,'

I thought to myself, and I conceived such a consuming hate for her as I had never felt before in my whole life. I longed for the first time to give my hate physical expression. I started to my feet and went towards her, but just as I was doing so I remember I became aware I was moved by angry passion, and I asked myself whether I was doing right to surrender to its power. And instantaneously the answer came that it was just, because it would terrify her; and so instead of resisting, combating my rage, I began to fan it into a still hotter flame, taking a peculiar joy in contemplating its rapid spread and increasing intensity.

"'Leave me or I'll kill you!' I shouted, and going up to her I seized her by the arm. As I uttered the words I pitched my voice deliberately in a higher key to express my wrath; and doubtless I did look terrible, for

she was so terror-stricken, that she had not the strength to leave the room. She only said: 'Vasa, what's the matter with you?' 'Leave me,' I yelled still louder, 'you will drive me mad. I can't answer for what may happen!'

"Having let loose my angry passion, I drank it in with intoxicating joy. I felt a desire to do something extraordinary, something that would mark the topmost point of my mad fury.

"I conceived an almost irresistible wish to beat her, to kill her, but I was aware this could not be. Therefore, in order to give reins to my rage, I seized the paper-weight lying on the table and screaming out once again, 'Leave me!' I dashed it to the ground near where she stood. I had aimed carefully to miss her. She then went out of the room but remained standing on the threshold, and

while she was still looking at me (I did it expressly so that she should look) I took up various articles that were on the table—the candlestick, the inkbottle—and flung them on the floor, crying out, 'Leave me! be off! I can't answer for what I may do!' She left and I stopped at once. An hour later the nurse came and said my wife was in hysterics. I went to her room, she was sobbing and laughing by turns, she couldn't speak a word and her whole body trembled violently. She was not pretending but genuinely ill.

"Towards morning she quieted down, and we made up the quarrel under the influence of the feeling which people call 'love.' In the morning, when I confessed, after the reconciliation, I was jealous of Trukhatchevsky, she was not at all confused, but laughed in the most natural way imaginable, so odd it

appeared to her, she said, that an affection on her part for such a man should be thought possible.

"'Can a man like him produce any other feeling in a respectable woman than pleasure in his musical performances? If you like, I'm ready to refuse to see him any more, even on Sunday, though all the guests have been invited. I'll write and say I'm unwell and there's an end of the matter. There's only one thing provoking about it, that is, that any one, especially he himself, should for a moment consider that he was dangerous. And I have too much pride to let anything of the sort be supposed.' And this was not a falsehood. She honestly believed what she was saying; indeed, she hoped to evoke in herself by these words a feeling of contempt for him and so to defend herself from his attacks. But she failed. Everything was

against her, particularly that confounded music.

"In this way the incident ended, and on Sunday the guests assembled and the two performed again."

XXIII

"I THINK it superfluous to say I was excessively vain. Life without vanity has become nearly impossible. On Sunday I endeavoured to the best of my ability to give a recherché dinner and to arrange the musical evening with taste and success. I even went out myself to buy certain things for the dinner and called personally on the guests. By six o'clock they had come and he also was there in evening-dress with diamond shirt-studs of dubious taste. He appeared quite at ease, replied quickly to all questions with a smile of assent and approval, and with the peculiar expression which is intended to suggest that everything you say or do is exactly what he

had been hoping. All his unfavourable traits and characteristics were observed by me that evening with unwonted satisfaction, because they were calculated to tranquillise and show me that the level on which he stood was too low for my wife, who couldn't lower herself to it. I didn't allow myself to be jealous now. Firstly I had suffered from the pangs of jealousy till the uttermost bounds of endurance had been reached, and I now needed rest; and secondly I wanted to trust my wife's assurances, and I did trust them. But, though I wasn't at all jealous, yet, do what I would, I could not be natural in my intercourse with him and her during dinner and the whole first half of the evening till the music began. I was continually watching and scanning their movements and looks. The dinner, like dinners generally, was boring, conventional. The music began early.

" Ah, how well I recall every incident, even the most trivial, of that soirée; how he brought in his violin, opened the box, took off the covering which had been worked for him by a lady, took out the instrument, and began to tune it; how my wife took her place at the piano with an expression of indifference under which I could see she disguised considerable diffidence, mainly diffidence in her own powers; how, as soon as she was seated, the usual preparatory notes sounded from the piano and violin, the usual rustling sound of the music could be heard as it was spread out on the stands; next, how they looked at each other, glanced rapidly at the guests who were seating themselves, and began. He took the first accords, his face becoming at once grave, severe, sympathetic, and, as he listened to the notes he was producing, he drew his fingers carefully along the chords.

The piano answered him and the concert began."

Here Pozdnisheff stopped and uttered that peculiar noise of his several times successively. He was going on with his story, but merely snuffled and fell again silent. He went on after a pause:

"They played Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata: d'you know the first presto? Eh? Ah!" he cried, "it's a strange piece of music, that Sonata, especially the first part. Music generally is a strange thing. I can't understand it. What is music? What effect does it have? And why does it have the effect we see?

"Music, they say, acts on us by elevating the soul. That's absurd. It acts on us, certainly, acts with terrible effect (at least I'm speaking for myself) but is far from elevating the soul. It neither elevates nor depresses the soul, but provokes it. How shall I

explain my meaning? 'Music obliges me to forget myself and my real state, it transports me to some other state which is not mine. Under its influence I imagine I feel what I really don't, that I understand what I do not, that I'm able to do what is quite beyond my power. I explain it by the theory that music acts like yawning or laughing. Thus, although not sleepy, I yawn if I see others yawning, although I see nothing to laugh at, I burst out laughing if I simply hear others laughing. Music puts me instantaneously into that condition of feeling in which the composer of it found himself when he wrote it. My soul blends with his and I am transported with him from one frame of mind to another. But why I am so transported I don't know. He who composed the piece—Beethoven, for instance, in the case of the Kreutzer Sonata—knew quite well why

he was in that mood'; it was that mood which determined him to do certain things and therefore that condition of mind had a meaning for him; for me it has none whatever. That is why music causes only irritation, never completes anything. It is different if a military march is played; the soldiers then move, keeping time to the music and the object is attained; if dance music is played, people dance to it and the object is again fulfilled; if a Mass is sung I receive Holy Communion, and here, also, the music is not in vain; but in other cases there is nothing but irritation, and no light how to act during the irritation. Hence the awful effects that music sometimes produces. In China music is a State affair, and that is as it ought to be. Could it be tolerated in any country that any one who takes it into his head may hypnotise any one else and then do with him whatever

he has a mind to, especially if the hypnotiser is—Heaven knows who!—an immoral character, for example?

"It is indeed a terrible weapon in the hands of those who know how to use it. Take the Kreutzer Sonata, for instance. Is it right to play that first presto in a drawing-room to ladies in low dresses? to play that presto, then to applaud it, and immediately afterwards to eat ice-creams and discuss the latest scandal? Such pieces as that should only be performed in rare and solemn circumstances of life, and even then only if certain important deeds that accord with the music are to be accomplished. It is meant to be played and then to be followed by the deeds for which it nerves one; but to call forth the energy of a sentiment which is not about to manifest itself in any deed, how can that be otherwise than harmful?

" At any rate, the piece had a terrible effect on me; it seemed as if new feelings were shown to me, new possibilities unfolded, of which I had never even dreamed before. 'It is thus I should live and think, and not as I have hitherto lived and thought,' a voice seemed to whisper in my soul. What the new object of knowledge was, I couldn't satisfactorily explain to myself, but the consciousness of its existence was most exhilarating. All the people I knew, my wife and he among the number, appeared in an entirely fresh light. After the presto they played the splendid but traditional andante, which has nothing new in it, with the banal variations and very weak finale. Then, at the entreaty of the guests, they performed an elegy of Ernst and several other light pieces, all good in their way, but which did not make even one-hundredth part of the impression on me which

the first piece produced. I was cheerful and good-tempered for the rest of the evening. I had never before seen my wife as she appeared that evening: those glistening eyes, that austerity and seriousness of mien while she played, that melting languor, that soft, blissful smile which irradiated her features when they had finished. I saw it all, but put no other construction on it than that she was undergoing the same experience as myself, that feelings new and never before experienced were revealed to her, brought vaguely within the scope of her consciousness. The soirée, which was a complete success, at length came to an end and the guests took their departure.

"Knowing I should have to leave for the country in two days' time, Trukhatchevsky said, as he was bidding me good night, that the next time he came he hoped to renew the

pleasure he had experienced that evening. I inferred that he did not think it possible to visit the house in my absence, and it gave me satisfaction. It was clear that, as I shouldn't return before his leaving Moscow, we shouldn't see one another any more. I shook his hand for the first time with unfeigned delight and thanked him for the pleasure. He also took a final farewell of my wife and their leave-taking appeared in the completed degree natural and correct. My wife and myself were both perfectly delighted with the soirée."

XXIV

"Two days later I went off to the country in the serenest, happiest frame of mind, after saying good-bye to my wife. I had always found plenty of work awaiting me in the country and a new life, an original little world, different from that in which I ordinarily lived. I worked ten hours a day, two days successively, in the Department. The day after I'd arrived in the country I was sitting in the Department, occupied in work, when a letter from my wife was handed to me. I opened and read it there and then. She wrote about the children, her uncle, the nurse, various purchases she had made, and added right at the end, as if it were a most insignificant

thing, 'Trukhatchevsky has called and brought the music he promised me, and offered to play again, but I refused.' Now, I had no remembrance of his having promised to bring any music and I certainly was under the impression he had taken leave for ever, and this bit of news was therefore extremely unpleasant. But I had so much business to attend to just then that I had no time left to ponder over the matter, and it was only in the evening, when I had returned to my apartment, that I read the letter over again. Besides, that Trukhatchevsky had called in my absence, the whole tone of the letter seemed enigmatical to me. The mad wild beast of jealousy within me roared in his den and strove to escape from it, but, fearing he might succeed I hastened to close the door.

"'What a hateful feeling this jealousy is!' I said to myself. 'What could be more

natural than what she writes?' And I went to bed and began to think about the business I should have to take in hand next day. During the sittings of the zemstvo I never could go to sleep very quickly, owing doubtless to the unfamiliar room. However, I very quickly fell asleep that night.

"As often occurs in such cases, I felt something like an electric shock and woke up suddenly. I woke up thinking of her, of my love for her, and of Trukhatchevsky. Horror and fury crushed my heart between them, but I endeavoured to listen to the inspiration of reason. 'What ridiculous suspicions!' I thought to myself. 'There's not a shadow of foundation for them. How can I so degrade my wife? On the one hand there's a fellow who might almost be described as a hired fiddler, known to be disreputable, and, on the other, a worthy,

respected mother of a family—*my* wife. How preposterous!' That was one current of ideas. There was also another, and the ideas that composed it were very different: 'Why shouldn't it happen? What absurdity is there in thinking such a natural and intelligible thing may have happened? He is unmarried, well-fed, sleek, and not only unprincipled, but guided by the belief that you should enjoy whatever pleasures you find in your way. And between the two creatures there is the connecting bond of music, the most refined lust of the senses. What considerations would probably keep him within limits? None. On the contrary, everything conspires to allure him. And she? What is she? She's the mystery she always was. I don't know her. I know her solely as a creature of instinct. And nothing can restrain a creature of instinct.'

"It was only then that I called to mind their faces as I saw them on the memorable Sunday evening when, after playing the Kreutzer Sonata, they played some small piece, I forget by whom; I only remember it was passionate to excess. 'How could I have been foolish enough to leave town?' I asked myself as I recalled their faces. 'Was it not as clear as daylight that everything was consummated between them that evening? was it not manifest that on that evening not only was there no barrier existing between them, but that they both, she especially, felt some little shame at the remembrance of what had occurred between them? I recollect how she smiled weakly, tenderly, happily, wiping the sweat from her flushed face as I drew near the piano. Already then they avoided looking at one another, and it was only at supper, when he was pouring her out some

water, that they glanced at each other and smiled almost imperceptibly.' I now shuddered when the look I caught on their faces returned to my mind, accompanied as it was by that weak smile. 'Yes, everything is now consummated,' one voice whispered in my ear. 'You are half-mad. Don't you know that it can't be?' exclaimed the other voice. There was something very weird and horrible, it seemed to me, in my lying there in the dark, a prey to such thoughts. So I struck a match, and a feeling of unspeakable terror all at once came over me as I looked around the little room with the yellow wall-paper. I lit a cigarette, and as it always occurs to one to smoke when one is moving round and round, as I was, in the same circle of irreconcilable contradictions, I smoked cigarette after cigarette in order to bedim my brain and avoid the sight of the contradictions. I didn't

fall asleep any more that night, and at five o'clock, determining I would no longer remain in that condition of mental strain, I got out of bed, called the doorkeeper who usually waited on me and sent him for the horses. I scribbled a note to the Department, to say I had been summoned to Moscow on very urgent business and to request that my place should meanwhile be temporarily taken by another member. At eight I took my seat in the tarantass and drove off."

XXV

THE conductor entered the carriage, and noticing that our candle had burned down to the socket blew it out, without lighting another. Day was already dawning. Pozdnisheff was silent, sighing deeply from time to time, until the conductor again went out, leaving us in darkness. Nothing could be heard but the clinking of the windows, the groaning and creaking of the carriages, and the clerk's regular monotonous snore. In the dim grey of the dawn, I could not distinguish Pozdnisheff's figure, but his voice became louder as it became more piteous and agitated.

"I had to drive thirty miles in the tarantass

and then go eight hours by rail. The drive was splendid. It was a frosty, autumn morning with bright, cheerful sunshine, the roads were smooth, the sunbeams dazzling, and the air keen. The ride in the tarantass was a pleasure. As soon as day dawned and I started, I felt easier in heart. Looking at the horses, the fields, the people on foot we met, made me forget where I was going. It seemed sometimes as if I were only out for a drive, and that none of the circumstances which had combined to make me undertake the journey had even had any existence in reality. And I felt an odd pleasure in thus forgetting myself. Whenever I did remember on what errand I was bound, I said to myself, 'Don't think about it now: we'll see afterwards what's to be done.' When we got half-way to the station, an incident occurred which arrested my progress and kept me still

more from my thoughts: the tarantass broke down and had to be mended. This accident was of greater importance than was at first apparent, as it occasioned a delay on the road which prevented my catching the express. So I had to wait some hours and go on by passenger train, reaching Moscow not, as I'd intended, at five o'clock, but at midnight. So I got to my own house about one. The drive over, the search for a country cart the work of repairing, the payment, tea at the inn, and my talk with the doorkeeper; all these things kept my thoughts away from what might otherwise seem their natural channel. By dusk everything was ready and I resumed my journey, which was yet pleasanter after dark than during the day. There was a young moon, a slight frost, a magnificent road, a jovial driver, and I drove on, hardly once reverting in thought to what was await-

ing me. Or was it that I enjoyed myself so well just because I knew what to expect and was taking leave of all the joys of life? At any rate this serene state of mind and the power of controlling my feelings ended with the drive in the tarantass.

"The moment I entered the train the conditions completely changed. This eight hours' travelling in a railway carriage was a terrible experience for me, something I shall not forget to my dying day. Whether it was that, having once taken my seat in the train, I realised in a more vivid way than before that I was nearing the goal of my journey or that railway travelling in general causes feverishness and unrest, I don't know. I only know that from the moment I entered the carriage I entirely lost control over my imagination, which worked without a stop, painting in the liveliest colours an endless

series of pictures one after the other, one more cynical than the other, and all of a nature to enhance my jealousy, all dealing with the one topic—the goings on at home in my absence, and her faithlessness to me. I was consumed with wrath, hatred and a queer feeling of intoxication caused by my very dishonour, as I contemplated those pictures, unable to tear myself away from them, unable to avoid looking at them, unable to rub them out, too passive to prevent them from rising before me. Nay, more, the longer I gazed at them the more firmly I believed in their reality. The life-like vividness with which the pictures presented themselves to my mind seemed to stamp the scenes they delineated with the impress of truth, and the ghosts of my brain thus managed to assume all the semblance of reality. It seemed as if some devil were employed in

inventing and suggesting to me against my will the most terrible fancies and suppositions. A conversation I had had many years before with Trukhatchevsky's brother now recurred to me, and applying it to Trukhatchevsky himself and my wife I used it to lacerate my heart. Trukhatchevsky's brother—although it had happened many years before, it all came back to me now with perfect distinctness—in answer to a question whether he went to improper places replied he didn't, as one could always form intimacies in good society. And now this man's brother had established an intimacy with my wife! 'No it's impossible!' I would then say to myself, frightened: 'It can't, can't be so! Why, there are not the smallest grounds for supposing anything of the sort. Did she not assure me herself that she considered the mere possibility of my being jealous of him dishonour-

ing? She certainly did. But then she lies, yes, 'she's always lying,' I cried and everything thereupon began da capo. There were only two passengers in the compartment, an old woman and her husband, both of them very silent, and even they got out at one of the intermediate stations, and I was by myself. I was exactly like a wild beast in a cage. Now I would suddenly jump up and run to the window; then, staggering to the middle of the carriage, I would begin to pace quickly forward as if trying to overtake the railway carriage; and the carriage went on quivering and shaking with its seats and windows, just as ours is doing now."

Here Pozdnisheff started to his feet, paced to and fro a few seconds and then sat down again.

"Oh, how I dread, how I dread these railway carriages! They fill me with dread.

" Yes, it was an awful time," he continued. " I would say to myself, ' Come, I must think of something else. Let it be the proprietor of the roadside inn, where I had tea to-day.' And then before the eyes of my fancy I would see the doorkeeper rising up with his long beard, and his grandson, a little boy of the same age as my Vasa. My Vasa! My Vasa will see how a musician kisses his mother. What will take place in his poor soul at the sight? But what does she care? She is in love, forsooth. And the whole thing would begin again. ' No, no! Let me think of the hospital inspection; yes, yesterday, I remember, a patient complained of the doctor, the doctor with the moustaches like Trukhatchevsky's. How disgracefully, how impudently he deceived me—they both deceived me—when he said he was going to leave Moscow! ' Whereupon the same anguishing thoughts

began again. There was no subject I could think of which wasn't connected with them somehow. I suffered fearfully. What tortured me most was the uncertainty, the doubt, the vacillation, the ignorance I was in, whether I ought to love or hate her. My anguish was so excruciating that I recollect I had the idea of going on to the line, lying down on the rails, letting the train pass over me and ending my sufferings. And the idea pleased me, for then, at any rate, I thought, I should be no more troubled with torturing doubts. The only consideration that hindered me from acting on the impulse was pity for myself, which, in turn, instantly aroused hatred for her. For him I had a very curious feeling of hate, combined with the consciousness of my humiliation and his triumph, but for her my hate was fearful. 'I can't make away with myself and leave her behind,' I said to

myself. 'It's only right she should suffer, she should at least feel I have suffered.'

"I got out at all the stations on the way for the purpose of distraction. At one station I saw people drinking in the refreshment-room, and I at once went up and poured myself out some vodka. A Jew stood by me at the counter, and entered into conversation with me; and in order not to be quite alone in my carriage, I followed him to his third-class compartment, dirty though it was, reeking with stale tobacco-smoke and littered with the husks of sunflower seeds; and I sat down on the wooden seat by his side. He was telling me a number of anecdotes, which I did not understand or even hear, because I went on thinking of what was absorbing my own attention. He noticed it and asked me to listen to what he was saying; and then I got up and returned to my own carriage. 'I

must think it all over again,' I said to myself, 'I must sift and compare all the pros and cons, and see whether there is really any cause for the pain I am enduring. And I sat down with the intention of weighing the matter quietly, but at that very instant, instead of a quiet consideration, the old train of thoughts started anew, and instead of arguments I saw the old pictures and fancies.

"'How often have I tormented myself,' I then thought, 'precisely in the same way before (I here called to mind my former fits of jealousy), and all quite baseless, as it proved afterwards! It may be my present suspicions are equally baseless—indeed, I'm sure they are. When I get home I shall find her asleep, and I shall feel by her words and looks that nothing wrong has happened, and it was all a phantom of my brain. Oh, how glorious it would be!' 'But no, it has been

so too often; this time it will certainly be otherwise,' an inner voice seemed to say—and the flood of bitter, poisonous thoughts rushed on me again. Yes, that was indeed torture! 'It's not,' I thought, 'into an hospital I would take a young man to show him the effects of wrongdoing, but into my own soul, to let him gaze at the devils that are rending it asunder.' A very repellent trait in all this was that I was convinced I possessed an indefeasible right to my wife, just as if she were myself, and at the same time I felt I couldn't possess her, she wasn't mine, she could do with herself as she pleased, and she was minded to dispose of herself in a way I didn't approve. And I could do nothing to him, still less to her. 'If she hasn't beguiled me, but intends to—and I know quite well that she does intend to—the position is still worse. It would be far better if she deceived me, so

that I should know for certain what to think and get rid of all these awful doubts and fears.' I could not formulate what I wanted or hoped for. It was sheer madness."

XXVI

"At the last station but one, when the guard entered to collect the tickets, I got all my things together and went out on the platform where the brake is worked; and standing there, the knowledge that the end was near only increased my feverishness. I had a sensation of great cold, which was soon followed by the chattering of my teeth. We reached the destination at last and I left the station mechanically with the crowd, called a droshky, took my seat and drove home. During the ride home I stared at the few passers-by, the doorkeepers of the houses, and the shadows projected by the vehicle, now before, now behind, thinking of nothing

meanwhile. When we had gone about half a mile from the station, my feet became very cold, and I remembered I had removed my woollen stockings in the train and put them in my travelling bag. Where was my travelling bag? Was it there in the droshky? It was. And where was the trunk? Then I became aware I had forgotten all about the luggage; but having looked for and found the receipt for it, I resolved it was not worth while to go back for it then, so I rode on. I have never been able since to recall my condition of mind during the drive home from the station. What were my thoughts? What were my wishes? All is now a complete blank.

"I remember only I was conscious something terrible was about to happen, an event of vital importance in my life was imminent. Whether that important event was taking

place because I thought so, or because I foreboded it, I can't say. Perchance after what subsequently happened, all the moments that immediately preceded it were tinted with gloomy hues in my memory.

"I drove up to the door. It was near one. A few cabmen were stationed before the street door waiting for fares; a reasonable expectation enough, to guess by the lights in the windows (in our apartments the drawing-room and parlour windows were brilliantly lit up.) Without attempting to explain to myself why the lights were burning in our room, at so late an hour, I walked up the doorsteps in that same condition of expectancy (fearing something terrible) and rang the bell. George, the lackey, an honest, zealous, but extremely stupid man, opened the door. The first thing that struck me in the ante-room was the overcoat hanging from the clothes-rack together

with other hats and coats. I ought to have been astonished, but I didn't feel the slightest surprise, because I expected it. 'Just what I thought,' was the mental commentary I made when, in answer to my query, 'Who's here?' George mentioned the name of Trukhatchevsky. 'Anybody else?' I inquired. 'No, nobody else.' I remember the tone of voice in which he said this, as if he wished to please me and dispel my fear that there might be someone else there. 'Exactly,' I murmured; 'and the children?' 'The children, thank God, are well. They have been asleep ever so long, sir.' I couldn't breathe freely and I couldn't stop the chattering of my teeth. 'So,' I thought to myself 'it isn't as I thought it might be. So far I have been accustomed to imagine misfortunes, only to find I was mistaken and all was well. This time it is not as before. I am now face to face in grim reality

with all that existed in my imagination, and, as I fancied, only in my imagination. Now I meet with it all perfectly life-like and real.'

"I was about to sob aloud, but the devil at that moment whispered: 'Whine and whimper give way to sickly sentimentality and allow them time to separate; and then spend your life in heart-breaking doubts and torture.' And self-pity suddenly vanished, and was succeeded by a strange feeling: you will hardly believe it—a feeling of joy that my torture was about to end, that I could now punish her, rid myself of her, give reins to my hate. And I did give reins to my hate, and it changed me into a wild beast, a malignant, cunning, cruel beast. 'Stop! stop!' I cried to George, who was going to enter the parlour. 'Look here, take a droshky and drive over to the station as quickly as possible and get my luggage.

Here's the receipt. Lose no time.' He went along the corridor to get his overcoat. Fearing he might disturb the pair, I accompanied him to his little room and stood by whilst he was putting on his overcoat. Through the parlour, from which I was separated by another room, came the sound of voices and the noise of knives and plates. They were evidently eating and hadn't heard the bell. 'Pray Heaven they may not leave the room yet!' I mentally ejaculated. George at last got his coat on and went off. I let him out and shut the door, and was seized with a weird, shivery feeling when I knew myself entirely alone and obliged to act quickly. Act how? I didn't know yet, I only knew it was all over then, there could no longer be any doubt as to her guilt, that I would presently punish her and break off all relations with her for ever. Hitherto I had had hesitations, I had thought to myself,

' Perhaps it's not true, perhaps I'm mistaken.' I didn't say or think so now; everything was once for all irrevocably settled. ' Alone with him, without my knowledge, and at night! It argues absolute forgetfulness of everything.' Or still worse: ' This audacity was the result of cool calculation; this assurance in committing crime was relied on as proof of innocence. It's all quite obvious. There can be no sort of doubt about it.' The only thing I felt any uneasiness about was that they might escape, might hit upon some new method of baffling and deceiving me, and so might rob me of the evidence of my senses, the possibility of demonstrating their crime.

" In order to lose no time in coming upon them and catching them, I went to the drawing-room where they were sitting, not through the parlour but along the corridor and through the nursery, walking on tip-toe. In the first

of the two rooms of which the nursery consisted the boys were fast asleep. In the second the nurse stirred and moved as though about to wake up, and I had a very lively idea what she would think if she knew what was going on. I was then filled with such deep self-pity that I couldn't restrain my tears, and in order not to rouse the child I ran back along the corridor on tip-toe to the study, where I cast myself on the sofa and sobbed aloud.

"I, an honourable man, the son of such respectable parents, I, who had cherished all my life the dream of domestic happiness in the bosom of my family, I, her husband, who was never unfaithful. That I should have lived to see this thing! She, the mother of five children, to throw herself into the embrace of a musician because he has crimson lips! No, she is not a human being, she is—— And

all this in the room next the nursery where the children are, the children whom she has been feigning all her life to love. And then again to send me such a letter as she sent me! How do I know? Possibly this has been going on for ever so long. If I had come to-morrow instead of to-night, she would have met me, with her hair tastefully dressed, her small waist artistically emphasised, with her langourous, graceful movements; and the wild beast of jealousy caged in me would have rent my heart asunder. What will the nurse think? and George? and poor little Liza? She was already of an age to understand something of what was happening. 'And the shamelessness! and the hypocrisy!' I exclaimed to myself.

"I wanted to get up, but I couldn't. My heart beat so violently I couldn't stand on my feet. 'I shall have a fit and drop down dead,'

I thought. 'She will indeed be the death of me. That's what she wants; killing would be nothing to her. But no; my death would be too much of a windfall to her; I must not give her that pleasure. Why, here am I, sitting in my room while at this very moment they are eating and laughing—— Oh, why did I not strangle her then?' I asked myself, as I recalled the moment, a week before, when I thrust her out of the study and smashed the things on the table. I had a most graphic recollection of the state of mind I was then in; and not only a recollection, but I felt the very same desire to beat, to kill, that glowed in me then. I remember how I burned to do something, to act, and how all ideas but those indispensable for action disappeared from my mind in a twinkling, and I was left in a mood similar to that of a wild beast or a human being under the influence of physical excitement in

a time of peril, when a man naturally acts with decisiveness, not hastily, yet without losing a single moment, and all with a single, definite purpose.



XXVII

"THE first thing I did was to remove my boots. Then I went in my stockings to the wall where my guns and daggers hung above the sofa and took down a crooked Damascus blade that had never been used and was very sharp. I unsheathed it. The scabbard slipped from my hands and fell down behind the sofa, and I remember thinking to myself, 'I must look for it later, or it may be lost.' I next took off my overcoat, which I had worn the whole time, and stepping softly I went *there;* and, creeping noiselessly, I suddenly threw the door open.

"I remember the look on their faces. I remember it because it gave me at the time ex-

quisite pleasure. It was a look of terror, and it was just what I desired. I shall not forget to my dying day the look of blended despair and terror visible on their faces the first moment they saw me. He was sitting at the table, I think, and as soon as he saw me he started to his feet and stood with his back leaning against the cupboard. His features expressed unmistakable, abject fright. Her face had the same look; but there was something else there besides; and if it had not been for that something else, if I had found no trace of anything but terror, what happened a little later would perhaps never have happened. For an instant, and only for an instant, her face betrayed, to my mind, at least the disappointment, the annoyance she felt at being disturbed, at having the happiness his society afforded her, interrupted. She seemed to have only one

thought, one wish, namely, to be left alone, to enjoy her happiness unmolested. Both of those expressions tarried a mere second on their faces. His was immediately replaced by an interrogative glance at her which plainly asked, 'Is it possible to right matters by lying? If so, it's time to begin. If not, something else will happen; but what?' Her look of annoyance and disappointment was succeeded, I thought, when her eyes met his, by anxiety for him. For a moment I stood on the threshold, holding the dagger behind my back, and in that moment he smiled and began speaking in a tone of voice so studiously unconcerned that it appeared absolutely comical. 'And we were at our music——' he commenced.

"'Well, this is a surprise!' she cried at the same instant, following the cue he had given her.

" But neither he nor she finished what they were about to say. The mad frenzy I had experienced a week before had again seized me, again I experienced the same mania for destruction, for using violence, for assuring the victory of madness, and I yielded to it body and soul.

" They never ended the sentences they began. That other alternative took place which he was so much afraid of; and it swept away in a trice all they were going to say. I threw myself on her, hiding the dagger the whole time, for fear he should prevent me from plunging it into her side under her breast. I selected the spot from the very first. Just as I was throwing myself on her, he saw what I was about and (it surprised me very much from him) caught me by the arm and shouted at the top of his voice, 'Think what you're about! Help!'

" I freed my arm and rushed at him without speaking a word. His eyes meeting mine, he suddenly turned pale as a sheet, his very lips became bloodless and white, his eyes shone with unusual brightness, and—what also surprised me very much—he dived under the piano and fled from the room.

" I rushed after him, but felt a heavy weight hanging on my left arm. It was she. I struggled and endeavoured to tear myself from her, but she weighed me down still more heavily and effectually hindered me from moving. This unexpected hindrance, the dragging weight and her touch (from which I shrank as from something loathsome) helped only to infuriate me still more. I felt I was boiling with rage and I could not help terrifying her and I exulted in the thought.

" Striking backwards with my left arm with all the strength I could muster, I hit her in

the face with my elbow. She screamed and let go my arm.

"I was going to run out in pursuit of him, when it occurred to me it would be ridiculous to rush off in my stockings after my wife's lover and I did not wish to be ridiculous, but terrible. Despite the irresistible fury that was impelling me, I was all the time conscious of the impression I made on others. At times, indeed, the impression helped to guide me.

"I turned to her. She had fallen on the sofa, and, holding her hands to her bruised eyes, was staring at me. Her face was expressive of horror and hatred for me, her enemy. It was just such a look as a rat might give when the trap in which it has been caught is being raised to the light. I at least saw only terror and hate in her features, just such fear and hate for me as love for another would

inevitably evoke in her. I might still perhaps have held myself in and might not have done what I did, if she had only kept silent.

"But she began all at once to speak and snatch at my hand, the hand that held the dagger.

"'Reflect what you are doing. Nothing has occurred between him and me, nothing. I swear it to you. Nothing.' I might yet have hesitated, had it not been for the concluding words, from which I inferred the opposite was true, that everything had happened. The words required an answer. And the answer would have to correspond with the state of frenzy to which I had worked myself and which went on crescendo, and would still go on increasing in intensity. Fury has its laws as well as other mental conditions.

"'Don't lie, you hellish——!' I yelled, gripping her arm with my left hand. But she

wrenched herself from my grip. Then, without abandoning my hold of the dagger, I caught her by the throat with my left hand, threw her on her back and began to throttle her. How tough her neck seemed! She seized my arms with both hands, tearing them away from her throat, and, as if I had only been waiting for this, I struck the dagger with all my strength into her left side beneath the ribs——

"Whenever people declare that in a fit of insanity they don't remember what they're doing, they're either talking rubbish or lying. I knew very well what I was doing and did not for a single moment cease to be conscious of it. . The more I fanned the flame of my rage, the brighter the light of consciousness shone within me, lighting up each nook and corner of my soul, so that I could not help seeing everything I was doing. I can't say I

knew beforehand what I was going to do, but the very moment I was doing anything (and I think some seconds in advance) I was conscious what I was doing, in order, so to speak, that I might repent in time, that I might afterwards have to acknowledge I could have stayed my hand. I was aware, for instance, I was striking her under the ribs, and the blade would penetrate. The moment I was doing this, I knew I was doing something horrible, a thing I had never done before, a deed that would be fraught with fearful consequences. But that consciousness was instantaneous as a flash of lightning, and the act followed so close upon it as to be almost simultaneous. My consciousness of the act and its nature was painfully distinct. I felt and still recall the momentary resistance of the corset and something else, and then the passage of the dagger cutting its way through

the soft parts of the body. She caught the dagger with both her hands, wounding them, but without preventing its piercing.

" Afterwards, in prison, when a moral revolution had already worked radical changes in my nature, I would ponder for hours at a time on the ideas and feelings which filled my mind during that fatal moment, recalling all possible details. I remember that a second, but hardly a second, before the deed was accomplished, I was terribly conscious that I was killing, that I had killed, a woman, a defenceless woman, my own wife. I remember the unutterable horror of this state of mind, and I conclude (and in fact I may add that I have a vague remembrance) that, having plunged the dagger into her, I immediately drew it out again, anxious to undo in that way what I had done, to stay my hand. I then stood for an instant without moving, and waited to see

what would happen and whether it was possible to undo it.

"She suddenly sprang to her feet and screamed: 'Nurse, he's murdered me!' The nurse, having heard the noise, was already on the threshold. I was still standing motionless, expectant, incredulous. Suddenly the blood spurted out from beneath the corset.

"I then perceived that what I had done was past recall, and the same instant I resolved that it was not desirable it should be undone, that this very thing was what I wanted to do and what ought to have been done. I waited till she fell and the nurse, exclaiming 'Good God!' ran to her aid. It was only then that I threw away the dagger and left the room. 'I mustn't get excited. I must think what I'm doing,' I said to myself, not looking at her or the nurse.

" The nurse began to scream and call the maid.

" I walked along the corridor, sent the maid to her mistress and went to my room. ' What must I do now?' I asked myself, and the answer at once occurred to me. Going into my study, I went up to the wall, took down the revolver, examined it—it was loaded—and placed it on the table. I next picked up the scabbard from behind the sofa and sat down. I remained sitting a long time, thinking of nothing, recollecting nothing. I was however, aware of a considerable stir in the other rooms. I heard a carriage driving up to the door with somebody, then another. I next heard and saw George coming into my study with my luggage—as if anyone wanted it! ' Have you heard what has happened?' I asked him. ' Tell the house-porter to go and tell the police.'

"He went out without replying. I got up from the sofa, took out my cigarettes and the matches, and began to smoke. Before I had finished one cigarette I was overwhelmed by drowsiness and fell asleep.

"I slept about two hours. I dreamt she and I were living on terms of affection, that we had bickered, but were making it up, and that there was some little impediment in the way, but we were friends at bottom.

"I was aroused by a knocking at the door.

"'That's the police,' I thought; 'I think I murdered her. But perhaps it is she herself who's knocking, and nothing has happened at all.' The knocking at the door continued. I didn't answer, but tried to solve the question: Had it all really happened or not? Yes, it had. I remembered the resistance of the corset and the passage of the knife through the body; and the recollection sent an icy

cold chill down my back and made my flesh creep.

"Yes, it had taken place. There was no mistake about it. Now it's my turn, I thought, to lay hands on myself; but whilst I was still saying it to myself, I knew I wouldn't kill myself. And yet I rose and again took up the weapon. It appeared odd. I remember how many times before I had been about to commit suicide—the night previously in the train, for instance—and it had always seemed so easy to do. It had seemed easy, because I considered it the best means of striking fear into her. But now not only could I not take my own life, but I could not even entertain the idea. 'Why should I kill myself?' I asked. No answer came. The knocking at the door went on. 'Ah, yes, I must first see who's at the door. There'll always be time enough for this,' I thought, as I laid the

revolver on the table and covered it with a newspaper. I then went to the door and drew the bolt. It was my wife's sister, a well-meaning, silly widow.

"'Vasa, what's all this?' she ejaculated, and the tears, always ready with her, flowed freely.

"'What d'you want?' I asked gruffly. I knew I oughtn't to be rude to her, I had no reason to be rude, but I couldn't hit upon any other tone.

"'Vasa, she's dying, Ivan Zakharievitch said so.' Ivan Zakharievitch was the doctor—her doctor and adviser. 'Is he here?' I asked and all my hate for her revived.

"'Well, and what if she is dying?' I went on.

"'Vasa, go to her. Oh! it's awful!' she sighed.

"'Shall I go to her?' I asked myself.

And I at once decided I ought to go, it was the proper thing to do in such cases; when a husband kills his wife, as I had, he's bound to go to her. If it's always done, I argued, I suppose I must go. 'Yes, if it should prove necessary,' I said to myself, thinking of my intention to commit suicide, 'I shall have ample time to do it afterwards.' And I followed my wife's sister. 'Now I shall have to prepare for grimaces and phrases,' I said to myself; 'but I mustn't allow them to touch me.' 'Wait a bit,' I said to my sister-in-law, 'it's so idiotic to go without boots. Let me just put on my slippers.'"

XXVIII

"WONDERFUL as it may appear, when I left the study and went through the familiar rooms. I once more hoped that all this had not really occurred, but the acrid smell of the vile drugs, of iodoform, of carbolic acid, overpowered me and I knew it was an awful reality.

"Passing along the corridor near the nursery I saw Liza. She stared at me with a horrified look in her eyes. I imagined all my five children were there and were looking at me persistently. I went to the door of *her* room, and the maid opened it and went out.

"The first thing that struck me was her light grey dress lying on the chair, all black with gore. She was in bed, in my bed, which

was easier to get at than her own, lying on pillows in a very sloping posture, her knees raised, her camisole unbuttoned. Something had been laid on the spot where the wound was. A nauseous smell of iodoform pervaded the room. What firstly impressed me and more deeply than anything else was her swollen, bruised face, the eyes and part of the nose being of a bluish-black hue. It was the result of the blow I had struck her with my elbow when she was trying to hold me back. No trace of beauty remained, but instead of it I remarked something repellent about her. I stopped at the threshold.

"'Go up to her, go up to her!' her sister cried.

"'Yes, she wants probably to repent,' I thought. 'Shall I forgive her? Yes; as she is dying, I suppose I may forgive her,' I decided in myself, trying to be magnanimous.

" I then went close to her bed. She raised her eyes to me with difficulty; one of them was much bruised; and she said falteringly, stammering over the words, 'You have your way now, you've murdered me'; and I noticed on her face the expression which was struggling with physical pain for mastery. In spite of the nearness of death it was that of the old, familiar, cold, animal hate. 'The children—you—will not—have. I will—not give—them—to you! She (her sister)—will take them.'

" As to what was the most important point of all for me—her crime, her faithlessness—she did not consider it deserving of even a passing mention.

" 'Yes, admire what you've done!' she cried, turning her eyes slowly towards the door and sobbing. On the threshold was her sister with the children. 'Yes, see what you've done!'

" I looked at the children and then at her bruised, blue face, and for the first time I forgot myself, my rights, my pride: I saw for the first time a human being in her, and so trivial and sordid did everything seem that had hurt me, even my jealousy, and so serious, so fateful the deed I had done, that I was ready to fall at her feet, take her hand in mine, and exclaim, 'Forgive me!' But I didn't dare. She shut her eyes and kept silent, plainly too feeble to speak. Suddenly her distorted face quivered, a frown passed over it, and she pushed me weakly from her. 'Why has all this occurred? Oh, why?' 'Forgive me!' I said. 'Forgiveness! All that is nonsense. Oh, if I could only keep from dying!' she exclaimed, raising herself up a little and fixing on me eyes that glittered with feverish brightness. 'You've worked your will. I hate you! Oh, oh!' she cried, evidently terrified at something as her

mind began to wander. 'Kill me now, kill me!' I'm not afraid. Only kill them all! kill him too! He's gone! he's gone!' The delirium continued to the end. She recognised no one. She died the same day at noon.

"Before that, I was taken at eight in the morning, to the police station and transferred from there to the prison, where I remained eleven months awaiting my trial. It was there I meditated on myself and my past life, and succeeded in getting a true insight into its meaning. Three days after they took me over to the house——" He was about to say something more, but he couldn't summon strength enough to subdue his sobs and had to stop. Making an effort, he went on:

"I only began to see things in their true light after I had looked on her in her coffin." He sobbed again, but hurriedly resumed: "It was only when I had looked on her dead face

that I realised what I had done. I then felt and understood that it was I, I who had murdered her, that it had come to pass through me that she who a little time before was living, moving, warm, was now still, wax-like, cold, and that this could be righted nowhere, never, by no one. He who has not felt this is not able to understand. Oh, oh, oh!" he cried several times and fell silent.

We remained sitting in silence a long while, he sobbing and shivering opposite me. "Good-bye," he at last called out, and, turning his back to me, lay down on the seat, covering himself up with his rug.

When we came to the station where I had to get out (it was eight in the morning) I went up to where he lay, to take leave of him. Whether he was asleep or only feigned to be asleep, I couldn't tell; but he didn't stir. I touched him with my hand. He uncovered

himself, and I then saw he was not sleeping. "Good-bye," I said, holding out my hand. He stretched out his and smiled, almost imperceptibly, but so piteously that I was nearly moved to tears.

"Yes, good-bye," he said, using as his last farewell to me the same words with which he had finished the story of his life.



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